

Sūrah Ibrāhīm

(Abraham)

Sūrah Ibrāhīm is Makkī and it has 52 verses and 7 sections.

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

With the name of Allah, the Most-Merciful, the Very-Merciful

Verses 1 - 3

الرَّفَدُ كِتَابٌ أَنْزَلْنَاهُ إِلَيْكَ لِتُخْرِجَ النَّاسَ مِنَ الظُّلُمَاتِ إِلَى النُّورِ بِإِذْنِ رَبِّهِمْ إِلَى صِرَاطٍ الْعَزِيزِ الْحَمِيدِ ﴿١﴾ اللَّهُ الَّذِي لَهُ مَا فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَمَا فِي الْأَرْضِ ۖ وَوَيْلٌ لِلْكَافِرِينَ مِنْ عَذَابٍ شَدِيدٍ ﴿٢﴾ وَالَّذِينَ يَسْتَحِبُّونَ الْحَيَاةَ الدُّنْيَا عَلَى الْآخِرَةِ وَيَصُدُّونَ عَنْ سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ وَيَعُودُنَهَا عِوَجًا ۖ أُولَٰئِكَ فِي ضَلَالٍ بَعِيدٍ ﴿٣﴾

Alif, Lām, Rā. This is a book We have sent down to you, that you may take the people out of (all sorts of) darkness* into the light with the will of their Lord - to the path of the Mighty, the Praiseworthy, [1] Allah, the One to whom belongs what is in the heavens and what is in the earth. Woe is to the disbelievers from a severe punishment, [2] to those who prefer the worldly life to the Hereafter and prevent (people) from the way of Allah, and seek crookedness in it. Those are far away in straying. [3]

*. Stands for "الظلمات" which is the plural of ظلمة (darkness). With the English equivalent "darkness" having no plural, effort has been made to convey the sense by adding "all sorts of" in brackets, because by using the plural form in the case of 'darkness' and the singular form in the case of 'light' the Holy Qur'ān has given a subtle hint to the fact that erroneous beliefs and conducts (represented in the text by 'darkness') have various forms while the truth (represented in the text by 'light') is only one.

Commentary

The Sūrah and Its Subjects

Beginning here is Sūrah Ibrāhīm, the fourteenth Sūrah of the Holy Qur'ān. This Sūrah is Makki. It was revealed before Hijrah with the exception of some verses about which difference exists whether they are Makki or Madani.

In the beginning of the Sūrah, there is a description of the attributes of the mission of messengers and prophets which is followed by the theme of Tauḥīd, the Oneness of Allah, and its proofs. It was in this connection that the story of Sayyidnā Ibrāhīm عليه السلام was introduced and it was in this context that the Sūrah was named: Sūrah Ibrāhīm.

The Sūrah opens with the words: *الرَّحْمَٰنُ أَنْزَلَكَ الْكِتَابَ إِلَيْكَ لِتُخْرِجَ النَّاسَ مِنَ الظُّلُمَاتِ إِلَى النُّورِ* (Alif, Lām, Rā. This is a book We have sent down to you, that you may take the people out of (all sorts of) darkness into the light with the will of their Lord). The initial letters - Alif, Lām, Rā - are from among the Isolated Letters (*al-Ḥurūf al-Muqaṭṭa'āt*) about which it has been said time and again that there is a standard policy and practice pursued by the most righteous elders in this matter. Their method is the safest and totally doubt-free. It tells us that we should firmly believe and have faith that whatever they mean or signify is true - but, stay away from launching deeper investigations into their meanings.

In the sentence which follows immediately: *كِتَابَ أَنْزَلْنَاهُ إِلَيْكَ* (This is a book sent down to you), it is appropriate and clearly justified in terms of the syntactical construction that it should be taken as the predicate of the word: *هَٰذَا* (*hādhā* : this) understood here, and the sentence should mean that 'this is a book which We have sent down to you.' By attributing the revelation of the book to Allah Ta'ālā here, and the address to the Holy Prophet ﷺ, a hint has been released which points out to two things. First, it says that this book is great as it was revealed by Allah Ta'ālā Himself, and then it is suggestive of the personal high station of the Holy Prophet ﷺ as he has been made its first addressee.

Said in the next sentence was: *لِتُخْرِجَ النَّاسَ مِنَ الظُّلُمَاتِ إِلَى النُّورِ بِإِذْنِ رَبِّهِمْ* (that you may take the people out of (all sorts of) darkness into the light with the will of their Lord). The word: *النَّاسُ* (*an-nās* : people) is used for human-

kind. It means all human beings who are present or will come in the future. The word: الظُّلُمَاتِ (*aẓ-ẓulumāt*), the plural of ظُلْمَةٌ (*ẓulmah*) which means darkness is well-known. Here, 'ẓulumat' refers to the darkness of Kufr (infidelity, disbelief) and Shirk (the ascribing of partners to Allah) and the darkness of evil deeds - and the word: النُّورُ (*an-nur*) means light, the light of faith. Therefore, the word: الظُّلُمَاتِ (*aẓ-ẓulumāt* : many a darkness) has been used here in its plural form, because there are many kinds and shades of Kufr and Shirk. And similarly, there are countless evil deeds too. But, the word: النُّورُ (*an-nūr*: the light of faith) has been introduced in the singular form, because faith and truth are one and the same. The sense of the verse is: We have sent this book to you so that, through it, you may deliver all peoples of the world from the multiple forms of darkness of Kufr and Shirk and evil deeds, and bring them out into the light of faith and truth, with the will of their Lord. Here, the particular use of the expression: رَبِّهِمْ (*Rabbihim* : their Lord) indicates that there is no other reason or intention behind this universal blessing of Allah Ta'ālā, but that He would let human beings of the world be delivered from every such darkness through His Book and Messenger. Indeed, it is the compassion and mercy which the Creator and Master of the entire humankind has, under the imperative of His being their Lord, always kept beaming on them. Otherwise, Allah Ta'ālā owes nothing to anyone, nor there is a right due against Him, nor is there anyone who can force Him to do anything.

Guidance is an Act of God

In this verse, taking people out from darkness into the light has been declared to be the act of the Holy Prophet ﷺ, although giving Hidāyah or guidance is, in reality, an act of Allah Ta'ālā alone - as it has been said in another verse of the Qur'an: إِنَّكَ لَا تَهْدِي مَنْ أَحْبَبْتَ وَلَكِنَّ اللَّهَ يَهْدِي مَنْ يَشَاءُ , that is, 'you cannot, on your own, give guidance to anyone, but it is Allah alone who gives guidance to whom He wills - 28:56). Therefore, by adding: بِإِذْنِ رَبِّهِمْ (with the will of their Lord), this doubt was eliminated because the sense the verse now carries is: This act of bringing people out from the darkness of Kufr and Shirk into the light of faith and good deeds is, though not in your hands originally, but it shall be with the will and permission of Allah Ta'ālā that you could do so.'

Rules of Guidance

This verse tells us that there is only one way all children of Ādam, the humankind on this earth, can be rescued from the evil layers of darkness into light, and the only alternative which can save humanity from the dual destruction in this world and in the Hereafter is no other but that of the Holy Qur'ān. The closer people come towards it, the luckier they would find themselves to be. They will find peace and security and relief and happiness in their present life as well as in the life to come with success at its best. And similarly, the farther they remain from it, the more exposed they shall be to living self-destruct lives both in this world, and in the Hereafter.

Not elaborated within the words of the verse is the manner in which the Holy Prophet ﷺ will deliver people from the many kinds of darkness and bring them into the light through the Qur'ān. But, this much is fairly evident that the usual method of correcting a people through a book is that the teachings of that book be spread out among those people and they be convinced to abide by it.

The Recitation of the Holy Qur'ān too is a Standing Objective in its own right

Apart from what has been stated above, there is yet another characteristic of the Holy Qur'ān, that is, its recitation and the reading of its words, even without understanding them, registers a positive effect on the human self. It helps its reciter to stay safe against evils. At least in the case of Kufr and Shirk, no matter how attractive their traps may be, a reciter of the Qur'ān, even though he may be reciting it without understanding it, can never fall into those traps. This has been witnessed in the current history during the Hindu movement of Shudhi Sanghtan. In this mass effort to convert Muslims, some of those who fell a victim to their trap were strangers even to the recitation of the Qur'ān. In our day, Christian missioneries maintain an inviting network fortified by many incentives and rewards in almost every region where Muslims live. But, their success, if any, is restricted only to households and families which are heedless even to the recitation of the Qur'ān - whether because of illiteracy and ignorance among them, or because of the perverted influence of what passes as new education (psuedo-westernized).

Perhaps, it is to point out to this spiritual influence that wherever

the Holy Qur'ān has described the basic functions of the Holy Prophet ﷺ, Recitation (Tilāwah) has been mentioned separately and ahead of the need to teach its meanings: *يَتْلُوا عَلَيْهِمْ وَإِذْ كَتَبْنَا لَهُمُ الْكِتَابَ وَالْحِكْمَةَ* (3:164; 62:2). It means that the Holy Prophet ﷺ has been sent to accomplish three tasks. The first task is the recitation of the Holy Qur'ān, and it is obvious that Tilāwah or Recitation is related to words. As for meanings, they are understood, not recited. The second task is to cleanse people pure from evils. And the third task is to teach the Holy Qur'ān, and Wisdom, that is, teach the Sunnah of the Messenger of Allah.

In short, the Holy Qur'ān is a Book of Guidance the basic purpose of which, no doubt, is to understand its meaning and act in accordance with it. It is also clear that its essential effect is to reform the whole human life, but alongwith it, the reciting of its words too, brings about a distinct effect in the correction and strengthening of the human self, though in an invisible manner.

As partly stated a little earlier, this verse attributes the act of bringing people out from all sorts of darkness into the light with the will of their Lord to the Holy Prophet ﷺ. In order to further refine the explanation, it can now be said that by this attribution, it has also been established that the giving of guidance is though the act of Allah Ta'ālā in reality - but, it cannot be received or acquired without the medium of the Holy Prophet ﷺ. The fact is that only that sense or interpretation of the Holy Qur'ān is trustworthy which has been communicated to us by the Holy Prophet ﷺ through his word or deed. Any interpretation contrary to it is not reliable.

What has been said in the last sentence of verse 1: *إِلَى صِرَاطٍ الْعَزِيزِ الْحَمِيدِ* (to the path of the Mighty, the Praiseworthy,) which goes on to verse 2: *اللَّهُ الَّذِي لَهُ مَا فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَمَا فِي الْأَرْضِ* (Allah, the One to whom belongs what is in the heavens and what is in the earth) refers back to the statement appearing in the beginning of verse 1. It is obvious that the mention of darkness and light in the above verse is not referring to the darkness and light which could be seen with naked eyes as a physical phenomenon. Therefore, it was to make it clear that it refers to the way of Allah. Whoever adopts this way would not stray away like the one who walks in darkness, nor do his or her steps falter, nor do they fail to achieve the objective set. So, the way of Allah means the way walking on

which human beings could reach their Creator and achieve the ultimate degree of success which is His pleasure.

It will be noticed that, at this place, the word: الله (Allah) has been preceded by two of His attributes: الْعَزِيزُ الْحَمِيدُ (Al-'Azīz and Al-Ḥamīd). Lexically, Al-'Azīz means Mighty, Overpowering - and Al-Ḥamīd denotes the Being who is deserving of praise. By bringing these two attributes before the basic name of Allah Ta'ālā the hint given is that the Pure and Sacred Being to whom this way is going to lead is Mighty, and Overpowering too, and deserving of all praise as well. Therefore, one who takes to this way will never falter or stumble anywhere enroute, nor the effort made on it will ever go waste. In fact, one is certain to reach the destination - only if one does not abandon this way.

After having mentioned these two attributes of Allah Ta'ālā earlier, it was said: اللَّهُ الَّذِي لَهُ مَا فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَمَا فِي الْأَرْضِ (Allah, the One to whom belongs what is in the heavens and what is in the earth). In other words, Allah is that particular Being who is the Creator of everything in the heavens and the earth and He is the absolute Sovereign having no partners or associates.

Said in the concluding sentence of verse 2 was: وَوَيْلٌ لِلْكَافِرِينَ مِنْ عَذَابٍ شَدِيدٍ (Woe is to the disbelievers from a severe punishment). The word: وَيْلٌ (*waiyl* : woe to) is used in the sense of severe punishment and fatal consequence. The verse means that those who dismiss and deny this blessing of the Qur'ān, and prefer to go on living in a multiplicity of darkness, should know that there is for them the darkest of destruction, and the severe punishment which is about to visit them.

The Meaning in Summation

The gist of the verse is that the Qur'ān has been revealed so that it rescues all human beings from darkness and brings them into the light of the way of Allah. But, certainly unfortunate are those who reject the Qur'ān itself - they, by doing so, are bringing punishment on themselves with their own hands. So, those who deny from the very outset that the Qur'ān is the Divine Word, are the targets of this warning of punishment obviously. But, those who, despite their belief in the Holy Qur'ān, have abandoned it in their practical life, in the sense that they never recite it, nor try to understand it, nor act upon its teachings, they too cannot be considered totally free and safe from becoming targets of this

warning.

After that, in verse 3, it was said:

الَّذِينَ يَسْتَحِبُّونَ الْحَيَاةَ الدُّنْيَا عَلَى الْآخِرَةِ وَيَصُدُّونَ عَنْ سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ وَيَمْنُنُونَهَا عِوَجًا
أُولَٰئِكَ فِي ضَلَالٍ بَعِيدٍ

To those who prefer the worldly life to the Hereafter and prevent (people) from the way of Allah, and seek crookedness in it. Those are far away in straying.

This verse identifies the three states in which the deniers of the Qur'an are found among disbelievers. These are their distinct traits of character. Firstly, they prefer their life in the present world to the life they are to have in the Hereafter. Therefore, they would tolerate any loss coming to them in the Hereafter for the sake of worldly gain or comfort. Given here is a hint towards the diagnosis of their disease - their chronic denial of the truth. Why is it that these people, despite that they have seen the all too manifest miracles of the Holy Qur'an, still remain hostile and negative towards it? The reason is that their lust for life in the present world has blinded them. They are unable to visualize what would matter most in their life in the Hereafter. Therefore, they are quite content with the darkness they are in, and towards light they do not care to come.

As for their second trait, it has been said that they certainly like to stay within the many layers of darkness they have chosen for themselves after all. But, they inflict injustice upon injustice when, in order to conceal their error, they would prevent others too from taking to the broadway of light, that is, the way of Allah.

Identifying Some Errors in the Understanding of Qur'an

Their third trait appears in: يَمْنُنُونَهَا عِوَجًا (seek crookedness in it). It can have two meanings. Firstly, they are always looking out for an opportunity, mean at heart and evil in deed as they are, to seek and find, if they can, some crookedness or fault in the otherwise radiant and straight path of Allah, whereby they might have an occasion to raise an objection or throw a taunt. This is the meaning given by Ibn Kathīr.

And this sentence could also mean that these people are always trying to find out something about the way of Allah, that is, about the Qur'an and Sunnah, which could be in line with their ideas and wishes

so that they can present it in support of the truth of their position. This meaning has been given in Tafsīr al-Qurṭubī. A fairly large number of educated people these days are involved in this sort of activity. They would come up with the framework of an idea, either as an outcome of their own error, or under the influence of some other nation. Then, they would go about looking for its supporting evidences from the Qur'ān and Sunnah. And if they happen to come across some word supposedly in support of that idea of theirs, they would take it to be a Qur'ānic proof in their favour - although, this method is wrong in principle because it is the duty of a true believer that he should first unburden his or her mind from personal ideas and wishes and then consult the Book of Allah and the Sunnah of His Prophet. Whatever stands proved clearly therefrom should, for him or her, become the personal creed.

In the last sentence of verse 3: **أُولَئِكَ فِي ضَلَالٍ بَعِيدٍ** (Those are far away in straying), described there is the sad end of the disbelievers whose three traits have been mentioned above. The substance of the statement is that these people have strayed out too far, so much so that now it is difficult for them to return to the right path.

Points of Guidance

According to Tafsīr al-Qurṭubī, though, in this verse, these three traits have been clearly identified with disbelievers and that they are far away in straying has been mentioned as their sad end, but, in terms of the principle involved here, any Muslim who has these three traits present in him, he too shall be deserving of this warning. The gist of these three traits is given below:

1. To keep the love for worldly life on top of the concern for the Hereafter to the limit that one starts avoiding exposure to the light of faith.
2. To prevent people from the way of Allah so that they too will join hands with them.
3. To try to misread and misinterpret the Qur'ān and Sunnah in order to apply them to fit into personal ideas and wishes.

May Allah protect us from it.

Verse 4

وَمَا أَرْسَلْنَا مِنْ رَّسُولٍ إِلَّا بِلِسَانِ قَوْمِهِ لِيُبَيِّنَ لَهُمْ ۖ فَيُضِلُّ اللَّهُ مَنْ يَشَاءُ وَيَهْدِي مَنْ يَشَاءُ ۚ وَهُوَ الْعَزِيزُ الْحَكِيمُ ﴿٤﴾

And We did not send any messenger but (speaking) in the tongue of his people, so that he might clearly speak to them. So, Allah lets go astray whom He wills and lets find guidance whom He wills. And He is the Mighty, the Wise. [4]

Commentary

Mentioned in the first sentence of this verse is the particular blessing and convenience granted by Allah Ta'ālā that whenever He has sent a messenger to a people, He has sent him speaking their language, in order that he would convey Divine injunctions to them in their language and usage whereby understanding these becomes easy on them. If the language of the messenger had been different from that of his addressees, it is evident that his people would have to undergo the burden of having to translate the injunctions before they could understand them and, still, the understanding of injunctions correctly would have remained doubtful. Therefore, when a messenger was sent to the speakers of the Hebrew language, the language of the messenger was also Hebrew. The language of the messenger sent to the Persians was also Persian. The language of the messenger to the Berbers was appointed to be Berberī. It is possible that a person who was assigned to be a messenger would be an individual from among the same people to whom he was sent and his mother tongue would have been the language of those people, and it is also possible that the language into which he was born may have been other than that of the people he was sent to, but as Allah Ta'ālā would have it, He had things arranged in a manner that the messenger learnt the language of the people he was to work with - as it was in the case of Sayyidnā Lūṭ عليه السلام. Actually, he was a citizen of 'Irāq where the language spoken was Persian. But, after his migration to Syria, he married among the people there and the language of the Syrians became his own language. Then, Allah Ta'ālā made him the prophet of a region of Syria.

As for our noble Messenger ﷺ, his mission is, in terms of the area

of operation, for the whole world and, in terms of the time duration, it is universally applicable right upto the last day of Qiyāmah. No nation or group of people in this world, no matter which country they belong to and what language they speak, could be outside the circle of his mission as a messenger and prophet. And every new nation and every new language which comes into existence upto the day of Qiyāmah shall all be counted among the community to which the Da'wah (call) of the Holy Prophet ﷺ will reach. This is expressly mentioned by the Holy Qur'ān: يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ إِنِّي رَسُولُ اللَّهِ إِلَيْكُمْ جَمِيعًا (O people, I am the messenger of Allah [sent] to you all - 7:158). According to a narration of Sayyidnā Jābir رضي الله عنه appearing in the Ṣaḥīḥ of Al-Bukhārī and Muslim, the Holy Prophet ﷺ, while pointing out to his five distinctions among the universal community of prophets, has said: Before me, every messenger and prophet was sent to his people and community. Allah Ta'ālā sent me to all peoples who are the children of Ādam (on this earth).

Allah Ta'ālā willed that humankind on this earth should originate from Sayyidnā Ādam عليه السلام whom He made the first prophet of human beings. Then, in proportion to the increase in human population in terms of its social and economic status, arrangements to convey the right guidance to them through messengers and prophets kept being made by Allah Ta'ālā. Injunctions, laws and religious codes relevant to every period of time and to the needs of every people continued coming. Finally, when the development of the human scene reached the stage of maturity, Allah Ta'ālā sent the foremost among the line of prophets, Sayyidnā Muḥammad al-Muṣṭafā, *ṣallallāhu 'alaihi wa sallam*, as the Rasūl of the whole world, and the Kitāb and Sharī'ah He gave to him was given in its most complete and workable form which was valid for the whole world and for all times right upto the Last Day of Qiyāmah. It was said in the Qur'ān: الْيَوْمَ أَكْمَلْتُ لَكُمْ دِينَكُمْ وَأَتْمَمْتُ عَلَيْكُمْ نِعْمَتِي (That is, 'Today, I have perfected your religion and made My favour complete for you - 5:3).

The religious codes of past prophets, may peace be on all of them, were also perfect and complete in terms of their time and region. They too cannot be called imperfect or wanting. But, the perfection of the Sharī'ah brought by the Holy Prophet ﷺ is not restricted to any specified time and region. It is absolutely perfect (that is, without restrictions or exceptions in any respect, or circumstances) and seen from this

angle, the perfection of religion is exclusive to this Shari'ah, and this is the reason why the chain of prophethood was discontinued after the appearance of the Holy Prophet ﷺ who is the Last among the blessed prophets, may peace be upon all of them.

Why Was the Qur'an Revealed in the Arabic Language?

When messengers who spoke the language of past communities were sent among them, they did not have to work hard on translating the message brought by prophets. Now, a question arises here as to why the Holy Prophet ﷺ was sent to Arabia alone with the Arabic language? And why was it that his Book too was revealed in the Arabic language specifically? But, a little deliberation would make the answer very clear. Everyone can understand when the mission and call of the Holy Prophet ﷺ became common for all peoples of the world speaking hundreds of different languages, then, there existed only two alternatives for the guidance of all of them. The first alternative was that the Qur'an be revealed separately into the language of every group of people, and the teachings and instructions of the Holy Prophet ﷺ also be made available separately in the language of every community of people. In view of the most perfect power of Allah Ta'ālā, managing something like that was not difficult at all. But, the great objective of sending one Rasūl, one Kitāb and one Shari'ah for all peoples of the world, an objective which sought to forge a religious, moral and social unity and mutually shared orientation, despite the existence of thousands of differences among all these peoples, would have remained unrealized in the event that such an alternative was taken to.

Then, there was the other alternative of letting the Qur'an and Ḥadīth for every people and every country be available in their separate languages. If this was ever done in that manner, it would have thrown the gates of interpolation in the Qur'an wide open through which countless inroads in it could have been made. Thus, the miraculous quality of the Glorious Qur'an, that its original words still remain perfectly protected, a quality which cannot be denied even by non-conformists and deniers of the Qur'an, would have not survived intact. What would have happened that despite there being one religion and one book, its adherents would have been dispersed on so many different tracks that there would have remained no single rallying pivot of unity. We can have some

idea of this problem if we recall the amount of differences that arose in the interpretation and exegesis of the Holy Qur'ān despite that it was revealed in the single Arabic language - though, these differences did remain within permissible limits. As for differences engineered through false and impermissible means, they just have no limits. But, notwithstanding all this, there is a viable unity and a sense of distinct identity still present among all those people who observe and practice what the Qur'ān teaches, no matter in whatever degree it may be.

In short, the assumption that the Qur'ān could have come for every human group separately making the mission and teaching of the Holy Prophet ﷺ universal is something even a person of ordinary intelligence would not find correct. Therefore, it becomes necessary that the Qur'ān be sent in one single language and the language spoken by the prophet should also be the same language of the Qur'ān, and then its translations into other languages be made and circulated. After the Holy Prophet ﷺ, his deputies, the 'Ulamā of the community, should spread out the teachings and rules of guidance left behind by him among their peoples and in their language. Therefore, Allah Ta'ālā chose the Arabic language over all languages of the world for a number of reasons.

The Distinctions of Arabic

First of all, the Arabic language is the official language of the heavens. The language of angels is Arabic. The Preserved Tablet (al-Lawḥ al-Maḥfūz) is in the Arabic language as the Qur'ān tells us: *بَلْ هُوَ قُرْآنٌ مَّجِيدٌ فِي لَوْحٍ مَّحْفُوظٍ* (Rather, it is a glorious Qur'ān in the Preserved Tablet - 85:21,22). Then, there is Jannah, the Paradise which is the real home of human beings and to where they have to return - and its language is also Arabic. In the Mu'jīm of al-Ṭabarānī, Mustadrak of al-Ḥākim and in Shu'ab al-ʿImān of Al-Baihaqī, there is a narration from Sayyidnā 'Abdullāh ibn 'Abbās رضي الله عنه which reports that the Holy Prophet ﷺ said: *أَجِبُوا الْعَرَبَ ثَلَاثَ لَيْلٍ عَرَبِيٍّ وَالْقُرْآنُ عَرَبِيٌّ وَكَلَامُ أَهْلِ الْجَنَّةِ عَرَبِيٌّ* (That is, 'Love Arabs for three reasons: (1) That I am an Arab; (2) and the Qur'ān is in Arabic; (3) and the language of the people of Paradise is Arabic.' [In Mustadrak, Ḥākim calls this narration 'Ṣaḥīḥ.' The same rating appears in al-Jāmi' al-Ṣaghīr. However, some Ḥadīth experts have called it weak and not authentic]. According to Ibn Taymiyyah, the subject of this Ḥadīth is proven and cannot be rated any lesser than 'Ḥasan' or good (Fayḍ al-Qadīr Sharḥ al-Jāmi' al-Ṣaghīr, p. 179, v. 1).

There is a narration reported in Tafsīr al-Qurṭubī that the language of Sayyidnā Ādam عليه السلام in Jannah was Arabic. When he was sent to the earth, and after his repentance was accepted, some changes in the Arabic language itself gave birth to the Syriac language.

This appears to support narrations which have been reported from Sayyidnā ‘Abdullāh ibn ‘Abbās رضي الله عنه and others. They say that the original language of all books Allah Ta‘ālā has revealed was Arabic. It was archangel, Sayyidnā Jibra‘īl al-Amīn who relayed it to the prophets by translating it to them while they conveyed it to their communities in their language. These narrations have been reported by ‘Allamah Al-Suyūṭī in Al-Itqān and by most commentators of the Qur‘ān under their comments on this verse. The gist of these reports is that the original language of all Scriptures is Arabic. But, with the exception of the Holy Qur‘ān, other books have been given as translated into the language of a country or people. Therefore, their meanings are all from Allah Ta‘ālā, but there is a change in words. It happens to be the unique feature of the Qur‘ān alone that, like its meanings, the words too are but from Allah Ta‘ālā. And perhaps, this is the reason why the Qur‘ān extended a challenge that even the combined force of the Jinns and human-kind of the whole world could not produce the likeness of a small Sūrah, rather of one Āyah of the Qur‘ān - because, in terms of its high status in word and meaning, it is the Word of Allah and a Divine attribute which cannot be imitated by anyone. Given their spiritual status, other Scriptures too are the Word of Allah, but none of the other Scriptures made such a claim, perhaps because they were not in their original form in Arabic but were its translation. Otherwise, in terms of being the Divine Word like the Qur‘ān, the uniqueness and inimitability of every such book was certain.

One major reason for the choice of the Arabic language is the inherent treasure of capabilities of the language itself for it has countless forms and methods through which a sense could be expressed.

And there is another reason too that Allah Ta‘ālā has naturally gifted Muslims with a certain affinity and congruity with the Arabic language because of which everyone goes on to learn the language easily as needed. This is the reason why, in every country the Ṣaḥābah reached, it took very little time when, without any compulsion, the Arabic language

came to be the language of the whole country. Take Egypt, Syria and Iraq. Arabic was not their language. Today, they are known as Arab countries.

There is yet another reason for this phenomena. The Arabs were, though involved in serious evil practices, yet their capabilities, qualities and feelings can be called unmatched even under such circumstances. That is why Allah Ta'ālā raised His greatest and the last messenger from among them, and chose his language to be the language of the Qur'ān, and gave instructions to His prophet that they are the ones who should be the first to be guided and educated: **وَأَنْذِرْ عَشِيرَتَكَ الْأَقْرَبِينَ** (and warn your close relatives - 26:214) - and the very first step taken was that He assembled around His messenger the kind of individuals from among these very people, individuals who sacrificed their life, wealth and children, almost everything for the sake of the Holy Prophet ﷺ taking his teachings to be dearer than what they had, even their lives. And it was the result of this pattern of behaviour that their personalities became so deeply coloured by his company and teaching that an ideal society rose in the world the like of which was never witnessed by humanity on this earth and under these skies. The Holy Prophet ﷺ charged this unique group with the mission of spreading the teachings of the Qur'ān and said: **يَلْعَنُوا عَنِّي وَلَوْ آيَةً** that is, 'Convey everything you hear from me to my people, even though it is a short verse.' His Ṣaḥābah, alert and sacrificing as ever, took this order of their master so seriously that they fanned out far and wide around the world and made people become familiar with the Qur'ān and its teachings. Not even twenty five years had passed after the departure of the Holy Prophet ﷺ from this mortal world that the message of the Qur'ān started reverberating throught the East and West.

On the other hand it was a wisdom of Allah's creation and a wise arrangement of His destination that He inculcated in the entire *Ummah* of *da'wah* (i.e. all those addressed by the call of the Holy Prophet ﷺ including the *mushriks* and the Jews and the Christians), a special aptitude and zeal towards learning, teaching, writing and publishing books and promoting their respective ideas, a parallel of which is not found in the past history of the world. It was for this reason that the non-Arab nations not only acquired the disciplines of the Holy Qur'ān and Sunnah

with a great enthusiasm, but the advances made by non-Arabs in the acquirement of the Arabic language and its promotion and wider dissemination did not lag behind the Arabs.

It is certainly an astonishing fact that, in our time, the number of books on Arabic language, usage and grammar present in the world happen to have been written by non-Arabs. And their contribution to the services rendered for the collection and documentation of the Qur'ān and Sunnah, and in its exegesis and explication, has not been any lesser than Arabs.

So, it was in this manner that the language of the Holy Prophet ﷺ and the Book he was given, despite being Arabic, overtook the whole world. At least, for all practical purposes of Da'wah (Call) and Tabligh (Spreading of the Message), the difference of Arab and non-Arab was eliminated. In every country and community, and among peoples speaking non-Arab languages, rose such 'Ulamā' who communicated to their own people the teachings of Qur'ān and Sunnah through their indigenous languages, easily and effectively. Thus, the wisdom of sending a messenger speaking the language of the addressed people stood realized and proved.

Toward the end of the verse it was said that it is for the convenience of people that Allah Ta'ālā has sent His messengers speaking their language, so that they can explain His injunctions to them clearly and satisfactorily. But, it is still beyond human control to bring someone onto the right path. The truth is that it lies in the power of Allah Ta'ālā alone. Whom He wills He lets go astray and whom He wills He would give guidance. He is Mighty, and Wise.

Verses 5 - 8

وَلَقَدْ أَرْسَلْنَا مُوسَىٰ بِآيَاتِنَا أَنْ أَخْرِجْ قَوْمَكَ مِنَ الظُّلُمَاتِ إِلَى النُّورِ
وَدَكِّرْهُمْ بِآيَاتِ اللَّهِ إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَآيَةً لِّكُلِّ صَبَّارٍ شَكُورٍ ﴿٥﴾ وَأَذْ
قَالَ مُوسَىٰ لِقَوْمِهِ اذْكُرُوا نِعْمَةَ اللَّهِ عَلَيْكُمْ إِذْ أَنْجَاكُمْ مِنْ آلِ
فِرْعَوْنَ يَسُومُونَكُمْ سُوءَ الْعَذَابِ وَيُدَّبِحُونَ أَبْنَاءَكُمْ وَيَسْتَحْيُونَ

نِسَاءَكُمْ ۖ وَفِي ذَلِكُمْ بَلَاءٌ مِّن رَّبِّكُمْ عَظِيمٌ ﴿٦﴾ وَإِذْ تَأَذَّنَ رَبُّكُمْ
لَئِنْ شَكَرْتُمْ لَأَزِيدَنَّكُمْ وَلَئِنْ كَفَرْتُمْ إِنَّ عَذَابِي لَشَدِيدٌ ﴿٧﴾ وَقَالَ
مُوسَىٰ إِنَّ تَكْفُرُوا أَنتُمْ وَمَنْ فِي الْأَرْضِ جَمِيعًا لَا فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ لَغَنِيٌّ
حَمِيدٌ ﴿٨﴾

And surely, We sent Mūsā with Our signs saying, "Bring your people out of (all sorts of) darkness* into the light and remind them of the days of Allah.** Surely, there are signs therein for every man of patience and gratitude. [5]

And when Mūsā said to his people, "Remember Allah's blessing upon you when He delivered you from Pharaoh's people who have been inflicting on you a grievous torment, slaughtering your sons and leaving your women alive. And in that there was a great trial from your Lord." [6]

And when your Lord declared, "If you express gratitude, I shall certainly give you more, and if you are ungrateful, then My punishment is severe." [7]

And Mūsā said, "If you are ungrateful, you and all those on earth, then, Allah is free of all needs, worthy of every praise." [8]

Commentary

The first verse cited above (5) mentions that Allah Ta'ālā sent Sayyidnā Mūsā عليه السلام with His 'Āyāt' (verses or signs) to bring his people out from the darkness of disbelief and disobedience into the light of faith and obedience.

The word: آيَات (Āyāt) could mean the verses of the Torah for its very purpose was to spread the light of truth. 'Āyāt' is at times used in the sense of miracles. At this place, this meaning could also apply for Allah Ta'ālā had particularly blessed Sayyidnā Mūsā عليه السلام with nine miracles out of which the miracle of his staff turning into a snake and his hand becoming radiant have been mentioned at several places in the Qur'ān. If 'Āyāt' is taken in the sense of miracles, it would mean that Sayyidnā

*. Please see footnote on the first verse of this Sūrah.

**. The 'Days of Allah' here refers to the events of the past when Allah had graced some people with His favours and subjected some others to His punishment.

Mūsā عليه السلام was sent with such open miracles that no sane human being, once he had seen them, could ever go on sticking to his earlier denial and disobedience.

A Subtle Point

It will be noted that the word used in this verse is: قَوْمٌ (*qawm*) while asking Sayyidnā Mūsā عليه السلام to bring his people from darkness into the light. But, when this very subject was taken up in the first verse of this particular Sūrah by addressing the Holy Prophet ﷺ, the word: قَوْمٌ (*qawm*) was not used there. Instead, used there was the word: النَّاسُ (*an-nās*) : لِيُخْرِجَ النَّاسَ مِنَ الظُّلُمَاتِ إِلَى النُّورِ : (that you may take the people [that is, the human beings] out of [all sorts of] darkness into the light). Implied here is the sense that the Divinely ordained mission of Sayyidnā Mūsā عليه السلام as a prophet was only for his people, the Banī Isrā'īl, and for others in Egypt while the coming of the Holy Prophet ﷺ was destined for the human beings of the entire world.

Then, it was said: وَذَكِّرْهُمْ بِأَيَّامِ اللَّهِ (and remind them of the days of Allah).

'The Days of Allah'

The word: أَيَّامٌ (*ayyām*) is the plural of *yawm* (day) which is well-known. The expression: أَيَّامُ اللَّهِ (*Ayyāmullāh*) is used in two senses and both can be applied here. (1) Firstly, it could denote the particular days in which some war or revolution has occurred, for example, the battles of Badr, Uhud, Aḥzāb, Ḥunain and other events of this nature, or they may refer to major events when punishment overtook past communities which pulverized or destroyed nations and peoples known to be great and powerful. If so, the objective behind reminding these people of the 'Days of Allah' would be to warn them against the evil end of their disbelief.

(2) "And remind them of 'the Days of Allah'" carries another meaning also, that is, the blessings and favours of Allah Ta'ālā. In this case, reminding them of these Days would be a form of constructive admonition which, when directed at someone basically good by reminding him of the favour done by his benefactor, would result in his being ashamed of his hostility and disobedience.

The general pattern of the Qur'ānic method of reform is to tie a command given with relevant ways to act upon it which appear synchronized with it. Here, in the first sentence, Sayyidnā Mūsā عليه السلام has been commanded to either recite the verses of Allah or show miracles to his people and bring them out from the darkness of disbelief into the light of faith. How would this be done? The sentences that follow give the method: There are two ways of bringing the disobedient ones to the right path: (1) Putting the fear of punishment in their hearts; (2) to remind them of Divine blessings and favours and to persuade them to take to being obedient to Allah. The sentence: ذَكِّرْهُمْ بِأَيِّمِ اللَّهِ (and remind them of the Days of Allah) could mean both. If so, the sense would be that he should tell them about the evil fate of those who disobeyed from among the past communities, how punishment came upon them and how they were either killed in the Jihād or were disgraced. May be, by being so reminded, they take a lesson and save themselves from it. Similar to this there are so many usual blessings of Allah Ta'ālā which keep coming to them day and night, and also the special ones which were turned towards them in the hour of their need, for example, the shade of clouds over their heads in the wilderness of Tih (the desert of Sinai), the coming of Mann and Salvā as food, the gushing forth of streams from stones when they needed water. So, they could be reminded of these and many other blessings of this nature and invited to believe in the Oneness of Allah and follow the path of obedience to Allah Ta'ālā.

Said in the last sentence of the first verse (5) was: إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَآيَاتٍ لِّكُلِّ صَبَّارٍ شَكُورٍ (Surely, there are signs therein for every man of patience and gratitude). Here, 'āyāt' means signs and proofs. The word: صَبَّارٍ (*ṣabbār*) is a form of exaggeration derived from: صَبْرٍ (*ṣabr*) which means very patient and much enduring, while the word: شَكُورٍ (*shakūr*) is a form of exaggeration derived from: شَكَرٍ (*shukr*) which means very grateful. The sentence means that the Days of Allah - that is, past events whether related to the punishment of the deniers of truth, or to the blessings and favours of Allah Ta'ālā - are full of the signs and proofs of the perfect power and eloquent wisdom of Allah Ta'ālā, particularly for a person who is much observing of patience and gratitude.

The sense is that these open signs and proofs, though they are for the guidance of every observer, but certainly unfortunate are the disbe-

lievers who just do not care to ponder over them and, as a result, remain deprived of the benefit they would have derived from them. People who really benefit from these signs and proofs are those who have combined in their person the best of patience and gratitude. The reference here is to true believers - as it appears in a narration of Sayyidnā Anas رضي الله عنه carried by al-Baihaqī where the Holy Prophet ﷺ has been reported to have said: 'Īmān is composed of two parts, half of it is patience and the other half, gratitude.' (Maḏharī)

Sayyidnā 'Abdullāh ibn Mas'ūd رضي الله عنه said: Ṣabr is the half of 'Īmān. Based on a narration of Sayyidnā Ṣuhayb رضي الله عنه appearing in the Ṣaḥīḥ of Muslim and the Musnad of Aḥmad, the Holy Prophet ﷺ has been reported to have said: Every state of affairs for a true believer is nothing but good. This is a quality of life no one else has been blessed with. This is because a true believer, if he finds comfort, blessing, honour or recognition, shows his gratitude before Allah Ta'ālā for these which then becomes a source of good for him both physically and spiritually (in the material world, the blessings Divinely promised increase, and abide, while in the world to come, the Hereafter, one receives the greatest of rewards for his or her gratitude). And, if a true believer is hit by pain or hardship, he observes patience against it. Because of his patience, that hardship turns into ease and comfort for him. In the present world, this happens when the observers of patience are blessed with the company of Allah Ta'ālā as said in the Holy Qur'ān: إِنَّ اللَّهَ مَعَ الصَّابِرِينَ ('Surely, Allah is with those who observe patience'- 8:46). And anyone who has Allah with him ultimately finds his hardship changed into comfort. As for the Hereafter, we know that there the supreme reward for having observed patience is limitless with Allah Ta'ālā, as said in the Holy Qur'ān: إِنَّمَا يُوفَّى الصَّابِرُونَ أَجْرَهُمْ بِغَيْرِ حِسَابٍ (but then, paid in full to those who observe patience shall be their reward without reckoning - 39:10).

To sum up, no state in which a true believer is can be called bad. It is good all along. A fall would make him rise again and when hit by hardships he would emerge stronger and more polished.

So, 'Īmān is a priceless asset which transforms even shocks of hardship into drafts of comfort. Sayyidnā Abū Al-Dardā' رضي الله عنه said that he had heard the Holy Prophet ﷺ say: 'Allah Ta'ālā told Sayyidnā 'Īsā عليه السلام: I am going to create a community after you who are such that if they have

what they desire and things turn out the way they want them to, then, they would be grateful, and if they have to face an unpleasant situation, against their wish and pleasure, then, they would accept it as a source of reward from Allah, and would observe patience. And this wisdom and forbearance demonstrated by them would not be the outcome of their own personal wisdom and forbearance, rather, We shall be bestowing upon them a certain part of Our Own Wisdom and Forbearance. (Maẓharī)

The substance of the reality of gratitude (*shukr*) is that one should not spend out the blessings given by Allah Ta'ālā in what is *Ḥarām*, in things which are not permitted, and in being disobedient to Him. One should also show gratitude by saying so as well, and by modeling and channelizing one's deeds in a manner that they would go on to become according to His good pleasure.

And the substance of the reality of patience (*ṣabr*) is that we should not worry about what comes to be against our wishes, taste or temperament, and that we avoid being ungrateful in what we say or do; and that we keep hoping for the mercy of Allah Ta'ālā in this mortal life too, and be certain of the great reward of patience due in the Hereafter as well.

The second verse (6) carries details of what was said earlier, that is, when Sayyidnā Mūsā عليه السلام was commanded to remind his people, the Banī Isrā'īl, of the particular Divine blessing which changed their lives. Before the coming of Sayyidnā Mūsā عليه السلام, they were living as slaves of the Pharaoh. Even as slaves, they were not treated humanly. Boys born among them were killed at birth. Only girls were left to survive and serve. After the appearance of Sayyidnā Mūsā عليه السلام, such was his *barakah* that Allah Ta'ālā had them delivered from the punishing clutches of the Pharaoh.

The Outcome of Gratitude and Ingratitude

In the third verse (7), it was said: **وَإِذْ تَأَذَّنُ رَبُّكُمْ لَئِنْ شَكَرْتُمْ لَأَزِيدَنَّكُمْ وَلَئِنْ كَفَرْتُمْ إِنَّ عَذَابِي لَشَدِيدٌ** (And when your Lord declared, "If you express gratitude, I shall certainly give you more, and if you are ungrateful, then My punishment is severe."). The word: **تَأَذَّنُ** (*ta'adhdhana*) is used in the sense of making known or announcing. The sense of the verse is that Allah Ta'ālā has announced it for all to hear: 'If you are thankful for My blessings and do not waste them in acts of disobedience to Me and in deeds which

have been prohibited, and try your best to mould your deeds to suit My pleasure, then, I shall increase these blessings for you.' This increase could be in the amount and volume of blessings, or it could be in their continuity and permanence as well. The Holy Prophet ﷺ said: 'A person who is blessed with the Taufiq to be grateful shall never be deprived of *barakah* and increase in blessings.' (Reported by Ibn Marduwayh from Ibn 'Abbās - Mazharī)

And then it was said: If you are ungrateful for My blessings then severe is My punishment too. The sum total of ungratefulness is that one spends out the blessings given by Allah Ta'ālā in acts disobedient to Him and in things and ways which are impermissible; or, that one is tardy in fulfilling what has been made obligatory on him or her. As for the severe punishment against ungratefulness for blessings in the present world, it is possible that these blessings may be taken back all of a sudden; or, one may fall into some unwelcome circumstances as a result of which he remains unable to make use of that blessing, and finds punishment waiting for him in the Hereafter as well.

It is worth remembering at this point that in this verse, Allah Ta'ālā does promise good return, reward and increase in blessing, and that too in an emphatic manner: *لَآ زَيْدُنْكُمْ* (I shall certainly give you more). But, in contrast to this, for the ungrateful it was not said: *لَآ عَذَابُنْكُمْ* (I shall certainly punish you). Instead of that, given here is a limited warning which conveys the sense that 'My punishment too, to whomsoever it reaches, is very severe.' In this particular interpretation, there is a hint that it is not necessary that every ungrateful person has to undergo punishment - the likelihood of forgiveness also exists.

In the last verse here (8), it was said: *قَالَ مُوسَىٰ إِنَّ تَكْفُرُوا أَنْتُمْ وَمَنْ فِي الْأَرْضِ جَمِيعًا* (And Mūsā said, "If you are ungrateful, you and all those on earth, then, Allah is free of all needs, worthy of every praise.") This was said by Sayyidnā Mūsā عليه السلام to his people. He is telling them that should they or, for that matter, all inhabitants of the earth become ungrateful to Allah Ta'ālā, it is not going to cause any loss to Allah Ta'ālā. As for Him, He needs no praise or gratitude for Himself. He is Independent. He is beyond that. He is intrinsically Praised and deserving of praise. If you do not praise Him, the angels do, all of them, and so does every particle of this universe.

So, whatever good there is in gratitude, that is for you alone. Therefore, when you are asked to be grateful by Allah Ta'ālā, there is no gain for Him in doing so. In fact, it is His infinite mercy reaching out to you in your interest.

Verses 9 - 15

أَلَمْ يَأْتِكُمْ نَبُؤُا الَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِكُمْ قَوْمِ نُوحٍ وَعَادٍ وَثَمُودَ ۖ وَالَّذِينَ مِنْ
بَعْدِهِمْ ۚ لَا يَعْلَمُهُمْ إِلَّا اللَّهُ ۚ جَاءَهُمْ رُسُلُهُمْ بِالْبَيِّنَاتِ فَرَدُّوا أَيْدِيَهُمْ
فِي أَفْوَاهِهِمْ وَقَالُوا إِنَّا كَفَرْنَا بِمَا أُرْسِلْتُمْ بِهِ وَإِنَّا لَفِي شَكٍّ مِمَّا
تَدْعُونَنَا إِلَيْهِ مُرِيبٍ ﴿٩﴾ قَالَتْ رُسُلُهُمْ أَفِى اللَّهِ شَكٌّ فَاطِرِ السَّمَوَاتِ
وَالْأَرْضِ ۚ يَدْعُوكُمْ لِيَغْفِرَ لَكُمْ مِّنْ ذُنُوبِكُمْ وَيُخْرِجَكُمْ إِلَىٰ أَجَلٍ
مُّسَمًّى ۚ قَالُوا إِنَّ أَنْتُمْ إِلَّا بَشَرٌ مِّثْلُنَا ۚ تُرِيدُونَ أَنْ تَصُدُّونَا عَمَّا كَانَ
يَعْبُدُ آبَاؤُنَا فَاتُّونَا بِسُلْطَنِ مُّبِينٍ ﴿١٠﴾ قَالَتْ لَهُمْ رُسُلُهُمْ إِنْ نَحْنُ إِلَّا
بَشَرٌ مِّثْلُكُمْ وَلَكِنَّ اللَّهَ يَمُنُّ عَلَىٰ مَنْ يَشَاءُ مِنْ عِبَادِهِ ۚ وَمَا كَانَ لَنَا
أَنْ نَّاتِيَكُمْ بِسُلْطَنِ إِلَّا بِإِذْنِ اللَّهِ ۚ وَعَلَى اللَّهِ فَلْيَتَوَكَّلِ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ
﴿١١﴾ وَمَا لَنَا أَلَّا نَتَّوَكَّلَ عَلَى اللَّهِ وَقَدْ هَدَانَا سُبُلَنَا ۚ وَلَنَصْبِرَنَّ عَلَىٰ
مَا أَدِيتُمُونَا ۚ وَعَلَى اللَّهِ فَلْيَتَوَكَّلِ الْمُتَوَكِّلُونَ ﴿١٢﴾ وَقَالَ الَّذِينَ
كَفَرُوا لِرُسُلِهِمْ لَنُخْرِجَنَّكُمْ مِّنْ أَرْضِنَا أَوْ لَتَعُوذُنَّ فِي مِلَّتِنَا ۚ فَأَوْحَىٰ
إِلَيْهِمْ رَبُّهُمْ لَنُهْلِكَنَّ الظَّالِمِينَ ﴿١٣﴾ وَلَنُسَكِّنَنَّكُمْ الْأَرْضَ ۚ مِنْ بَعْدِهِمْ
ۚ ذَلِكَ لِمَنْ خَافَ مَقَامِي وَخَافَ وَعِيدِ ﴿١٤﴾ وَاسْتَفْتَحُوا وَخَابَ
كُلُّ جَبَّارٍ عَنِيدٍ ﴿١٥﴾

Has there not come to you the news of those before you, the people of Nūḥ, 'Ād and Thamūd and of those after them. No one knows them except Allah. Their prophets came to them with clear signs, but they turned their hands into their mouths and said, "We reject what you

are sent with, and we are certainly in confounding doubt about what you are calling us to." [9]

Their prophets said, "Is there any doubt about Allah, the Creator of the heavens and the earth? He calls you, so that He may forgive you some of your sins and give you time upto a specified term." They said, "You are nothing but a human being like us. You want to prevent us from what our forefathers used to worship. So, bring us some clear authority." [10]

Their prophets said to them, "We are no more than a human being like you, but Allah favours whom He wills from His servants. It is not for us to bring you an authority without Allah's permission. And in Allah the believers must place their trust. [11] And what is wrong with us that we should not put our trust in Allah when He has guided us to our paths? And certainly we shall endure with patience whatever you afflict us with. And in Allah should trust those who trust." [12]

And the disbelievers said to their prophets, "We shall certainly expel you from our land unless you come back to our faith." So, their Lord revealed to them, "We shall surely destroy the transgressors, [13] and shall certainly have you dwell in the land after them. This is for the one who is fearful of standing before Me and is fearful of My warning." [14] And they sought help and every obstinate tyrant failed. [15]

Verses 16 - 17

مِنْ وَرَائِهِ جَهَنَّمُ وَيُسْقَى مِنْ مَّاءٍ صَدِيدٍ ﴿١٦﴾ يَتَجَرَّعُهُ وَلَا يَكَادُ
يُسِيغُهُ وَيَأْتِيهِ الْمَوْتُ مِنْ كُلِّ مَكَانٍ وَمَا هُوَ بِمَيِّتٍ ۚ وَمِنْ وَرَائِهِ
عَذَابٌ غَلِيظٌ ﴿١٧﴾

The Hell is before him, and he shall be made to drink pus-fluid, [16] which he will arduously sip, and hardly swallow. Death will come upon him from every place, yet he shall not die, and before him, there is a heavy punishment. [17]

Verses 18 - 22

مَثَلُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا بِرَبِّهِمْ أَعْمَالُهُمْ كَرَمَادٍ اشْتَدَّتْ بِهِ الرِّيحُ فِي يَوْمٍ عَاصِفٍ ۖ لَا يَقْدِرُونَ مِمَّا كَسَبُوا عَلَى شَيْءٍ ۚ ذَٰلِكَ هُوَ الضَّلَالُ الْبَعِيدُ ﴿١٨﴾ أَلَمْ تَرَ أَنَّ اللَّهَ خَلَقَ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ بِالْحَقِّ ۚ إِنَّ يَئِشًا يَذْهَبُكُمْ وَيَأْتِ بِخَلْقٍ جَدِيدٍ ﴿١٩﴾ وَمَا ذَٰلِكَ عَلَى اللَّهِ بِعَزِيزٍ ﴿٢٠﴾ وَبَرَزُوا لِلَّهِ جَمِيعًا فَقَالَ الضُّعَفَاءُ لِلَّذِينَ اسْتَكْبَرُوا إِنَّا كُنَّا لَكُمْ تَبَعًا فَهَلْ أَنْتُمْ مُغْنَوْنَ عَنَّا مِنْ عَذَابِ اللَّهِ مِنْ شَيْءٍ ۚ قَالُوا لَوْ هَدَانَا اللَّهُ لَهْدَيْنَاكُمْ ۚ سَوَاءٌ عَلَيْنَا أَجَزَعْنَا أَمْ صَبَرْنَا مَا لَنَا مِنْ مَّحِيصٍ ﴿٢١﴾ وَقَالَ الشَّيْطَانُ لَمَّا قُضِيَ الْأَمْرُ إِنَّ اللَّهَ وَعَدَكُمْ وَعْدَ الْحَقِّ وَوَعَدْتُكُمْ فَأَخْلَفْتُكُمْ ۚ وَمَا كَانَ لِيَ عَلَيْكُمْ مِنْ سُلْطَانٍ إِلَّا أَن دَعَوْتُكُمْ فَاسْتَجَبْتُمْ لِي ۚ فَلَا تُلْهُمُونِي وَلَوْ مَوْا أَنفُسَكُمْ ۚ مَا أَنَا بِمُصْرِخِكُمْ وَمَا أَنْتُمْ بِمُصْرِخِي ۚ إِنِّي كَفَرْتُ بِمَا أَشْرَكْتُمُونِ مِنْ قَبْلُ ۚ إِنَّ الظَّالِمِينَ لَهُمْ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ ﴿٢٢﴾

The deeds of those who disbelieve their Lord are like ashes blown away by the wind on a stormy day. They will not be able to gain anything out of what they did. That is the wandering away from the path. [18]

Have you not seen that Allah has created the heavens and the earth in a proper way? If He wills, He can put you away and bring a new creation; [19] and that is not difficult for Allah. [20]

And all of them shall appear before Allah. Then, the weak shall say to the arrogant, "We were your followers. So, can you relieve us a little from Allah's punishment?" They will say, "Had Allah guided us, we would have guided you. It is all the same for us whether we deplore or endure, we have no way out." [21]

And the Satan will say when the matter will have been decided, "Allah promised you a truthful promise while I

gave you a promise and did not fulfill it. And I had no authority over you, except that I invited you and you accepted my call. Hence, do not blame me, but blame yourselves. Neither I can come to your help, nor can you come to my help. I disown your associating me with Allah in the past. Surely, there is a painful punishment for the unjust." [22]

Verse 23

وَأُدْخِلَ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ جَنَّاتٍ تَجْرَى مِنْ تَحْتِهَا
الْأَنْهَارُ خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا بِإِذْنِ رَبِّهِمْ ط تَحِيَّتُهُمْ فِيهَا سَلَامٌ ﴿٢٣﴾

And those who believed and did good deeds shall be admitted to Gardens beneath which rivers flow, living there for ever by the will of Allah. There they shall greet each other with "Salām." [23]

Verses 24 - 25

أَلَمْ تَرَ كَيْفَ ضَرَبَ اللَّهُ مَثَلًا كَلِمَةً طَيِّبَةً كَشَجَرَةٍ طَيِّبَةٍ أَصْلُهَا ثَابِتٌ
وَفَرْعُهَا فِي السَّمَاءِ ﴿٢٤﴾ تُؤْتِي أُكْلَهَا كُلَّ حِينٍ بِإِذْنِ رَبِّهَا ط
وَيَضْرِبُ اللَّهُ الْأَمْثَالَ لِلنَّاسِ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَتَذَكَّرُونَ ﴿٢٥﴾

Have you not seen how Allah has set forth a parable: 'A good word is like a good tree, having its root firm and its branches in the sky. [24] It brings its fruits at all times with the will of its Lord.' And Allah sets forth the parables for the people, so that they may take lesson. [25]

Verses 26 - 29

وَمَثَلُ كَلِمَةٍ خَبِيثَةٍ كَشَجَرَةٍ خَبِيثَةٍ اجْتُثَّتْ مِنْ فَوْقِ الْأَرْضِ مَالَهَا
مِنْ قَرَارٍ ﴿٢٦﴾ يُثْبِتُ اللَّهُ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا بِالْقَوْلِ الثَّابِتِ فِي الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا
وَفِي الْآخِرَةِ ط وَيُضِلُّ اللَّهُ الظَّالِمِينَ ط وَيَفْعَلُ اللَّهُ مَا يَشَاءُ ﴿٢٧﴾ أَلَمْ تَرَ
إِلَى الَّذِينَ بَدَّلُوا نِعْمَتَ اللَّهِ كُفْرًا وَآحَلُّوا قَوْمَهُمْ دَارَ الْبَوَارِ ﴿٢٨﴾

جَهَنَّمَ ۚ يَصْلَوْنَهَا ۖ وَبُئْسَ الْقَرَارُ ﴿٢٩﴾

And the parable of a bad word is like a bad tree, removed from the top soil, having no firm root. [26] Allah keeps the believers firm with the stable word in the worldly life and in the Hereafter. And Allah lets the unjust go astray. And Allah does what He wills. [27]

Have you not seen those who changed the favour of Allah with disbelief and landed their people in the house of destruction, [28] the Jahannam. They shall enter it. And it is an evil abode. [29]

Commentary

In verse 18, Allah Ta'ālā has likened the deeds of disbelievers to ashes which, if blown away by the wind, would scatter all over leaving no traces behind and making it impossible for someone interested to retrieve them and put them back to some use. So, the verse: *مَثَلُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا بِرَبِّهِمْ أَعْمَالُهُمْ كَرَمَادٍ اشْتَدَّتْ بِهِ الرِّيحُ فِي يَوْمٍ عَاصِفٍ* (The deeds of those who disbelieve their Lord are like ashes blown away by the wind on a stormy day - 18) means that the deeds of disbelievers - though, they may obviously be good too - still, they too do not find acceptance with Allah Ta'ālā. Therefore, they are all wasted.

After that, in the verses cited immediately above, the similitude of a believer and his deeds has been given first (24) which is followed by a similitude of disbelievers and hypocrites (26). In the earlier verse, a believer and his deeds have been likened to a tree with strong trunks, and roots going deep down the ground watered by underground streams. Deep-set roots give strength and stability to this tree so that strong winds would not throw them off the ground. And being high above the ground level, its fruit too remains protected against polluting agents. Then, another attribute of this tree is that its branches should be fairly elevated skywards. And the third attribute of this tree is that its fruit could be eaten during all seasons and under all conditions.

What tree is that and where is it found? About that, the sayings of the commentators differ. In all likelihood, that is a date-palm. This view is supported by experience, observation, and by Ḥadīth narrations as well. That the trunk of the date-palm is high and strong can be noticed physically. That its roots go deep down the ground is also well-known,

and its fruit too is eaten at all times and in different ways and conditions. From the time its fruit shows up on the tree upto the time it becomes ripe, it is eaten in all possible forms and situations as is or as transformed into chutneys and jams and in a myriad other preparations. After the fruit becomes ripe, it can be stored throughout the year. It somehow comes handy morning and evening, day and night, summer and winter, almost every season, every time. Even the pith of the tree is eaten while sweet juice is extracted from it. Mats and other articles of use are made from its leaves. Date stones make fine fodder for animals. In contrast, other trees yield their fruit during particular seasons and they become available within those seasons. They are not stored naturally, nor everything in them is put to some or the other use.

Based on a narration of Sayyidnā Anas رضي الله عنه, Tirmidhī, Al-Nasā'ī, Ibn Hibbān and Hākim have reported that the Holy Prophet ﷺ said: The 'good tree' (شَجَرَةٌ طَيِّبَةٌ) - mentioned in the Qur'ān) is the date-tree; and the 'bad tree' (شَجَرَةٌ خَبِيثَةٌ) - also mentioned in the Qur'ān) is the tree of Ḥanẓal [colocynth, citrullus colocynthis] (Maẓharī)

According to a report from Mujāhid appearing in the Musnad of Aḥmad, Sayyidnā 'Abdullāh ibn 'Umar رضي الله عنه said: Once we were present in the company of the Holy Prophet ﷺ when someone brought the pith of a date-palm for him. At that time, he asked his Companions: 'Out of the many trees, there is the tree which is like a believer (at this point, in a narration of Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī, it has been mentioned that the Holy Prophet ﷺ also said: The leaves of this tree do not fall in any season). Tell me which tree is that?' Sayyidnā Ibn 'Umar says that he felt like telling him that it was the date tree. But, present there in the sitting were many senior Companions like Sayyidnā Abū Bakr and Sayyidnā 'Umar رضي الله عنهم اجمعين. I observed their silence and did not have the courage to say that. After that, the Holy Prophet ﷺ himself said: 'That is the date tree.'

One of the reasons why a believer has been likened to this tree is that the faith in Kalimah Ṭayyibah is his root, which is deep-set and strong. The accidents of the world cannot shake it out. There is no dearth of examples among the most perfect of all believers, the Ṣaḥābah and the Ṭabī'īn, rather among the staunch believers of every period of time, that they cared more about their 'Īmān and less for their life or

wealth or anything else. The second reason is their concern for purity and taste for decency in that they are not affected by the pollutants of the world - just like a large tree which remains unaffected by the impurities of the land surface. As for these two attributes, they bear similarity to: *أَصْلُهَا ثَابِتٌ* (with its roots firm - 24) while the third reason is that the way the branches of the date-palm are high and skyward so are the fruits of the *ʿImān* of a believer, that is, their deeds which are also raised toward the heavens. It appears in the Qurʾān: *إِلَيْهِ يَصْعَدُ الْكَلِمُ الطَّيِّبُ* that is, 'good words are raised towards Allah Taʿālā.' The sense is that what a believer does in the form of Dhikr (remembrance) of Allah, Tasbīḥ (proclaiming His purity), Tahlīl (saying *lā ilāha illallāh*) and the recitation of the Qurʾān keeps reaching Allah Taʿālā morning and evening.

The fourth reason is that the way the date fruit is eaten day and night at all times, in all seasons and under all conditions, it is in the same way that the good deeds of a believer continue day and night at all times, in all seasons and under all conditions. And the way everything about the date-palm is useful and beneficial, in the same way, every word and deed, movement and rest, and the effects generated by them, prove beneficial for the whole world - on condition that he or she be a perfect believer, and be a faithful practitioner of the teachings of Allah and His Rasūl ﷺ.

The Similitude of Disbelievers (Kuffār)

In contrast, the second image given is that of disbelievers. They have been likened to a 'bad tree' (*شَجَرَةٌ خَبِيثَةٌ*). It is similar to the example of the 'good tree' which refers to the statement of Muslim creed: *لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ* (*lā ilāha illallāh* : There is no deity worthy of worship except Allah), that is, *ʿImān* or faith. And, in this manner, the equation of the 'bad word' with the 'bad tree' denotes words and deeds of disbelief. As stated in the Ḥadīth quoted earlier, the 'bad tree' has been identified as: *حَنْظَلٌ* (*ḥanẓal*) and, according to others, it is garlic.

As for the 'bad tree,' the Qurʾān describes it by saying that its roots do not go deep into the earth, therefore, anyone can pull out the whole of it at will. This is what the expression: *أُحْثَّتْ مِنْ فَوْقِ الْأَرْضِ* (translated as: 'removed from the top soil) means - because the real meaning of the word: *أُحْثَّتْ* : (*ujtuththat*) is to remove the body of something as a whole.

That the deeds of a disbeliever have been likened to such a tree is fairly obvious. First of all, the beliefs of a disbeliever have no root or foundation. In no time, they would lose their ground. Secondly, they are affected by the filth of the world around them. Thirdly, the fruits of their tree, that is, their deeds, are worthless in the sight of Allah.

The Special Effect of 'Īmān

Described in the second verse (27) is the special effect of the 'Īmān or faith of a believer and the saying of *lā ilāha illallāh*: لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ: "Allah keeps the believers firm with the stable word in the worldly life and in the Hereafter". It means that the Kalimah Ṭayyibah, the pivotal guiding principle of a believer, is a 'stable word,' stable like a strong and firmly established tree which is kept standing powerfully and surviving eternally by Allah Ta'ālā, in this world, and in the Hereafter as well. However, the condition is that this blessed statement is uttered with unalloyed sincerity and that the sense of: *lā ilāha illallāh* : لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ (there is no deity worthy of worship except Allah) is understood fully and clearly following which it should be adopted as the guiding principle of life.

In other words, one who believes in Kalimah Ṭayyibah is supported and strengthened with the grace of Allah Ta'ālā because of which he or she stands firm by this conviction right upto the time of death, no matter how many challenges and unwelcome happenings have to be encountered in its defence. As for the 'Ākhirah or the Hereafter, one is helped with this Kalimah when it is made to stay on and keep emitting its beneficial effects. It has been said in a Ḥadīth of Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī that "Ākhirah" (Hereafter) in this verse means Barzakh (the post-death and pre-Resurrection state of life) that is, the world of the grave.

The Reward and Punishment of the Grave Stand Proved from the Qur'ān and Sunnah

According to Ḥadīth, the Holy Prophet ﷺ said: When a believer will be questioned in the grave, he or she will remain firm on this Kalimah, even in a place so awesome and a state so punishing, of course, with Divine will and support, and bear witness to the blessed statement: *lā ilāha illallāh*. And then he said: This is what the saying of the Qur'ān: يُثَبِّتُ اللَّهُ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا بِالْقَوْلِ الثَّابِتِ فِي الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا وَفِي الْآخِرَةِ (Allah keeps the believers firm with the stable word in the worldly life and in the Hereafter - 27) means. (This Ḥadīth was narrated by Sayyidnā Barā' ibn 'Āzib). Similar *aḥādīth* have

been reported from about forty Ṣaḥābah رضى الله عنهم اجمعين with reliable chains of authorities which Ibn Kathīr has put together at this stage of his Tafsīr. Ash-Shaykh Jalāluddīn As-Suyūṭī, in his versified treatise At-Tathbīt 'Ind at-Tabyīt, and by referring to seventy *aḥādīth* in Sharḥ Aṣ-Ṣudūr, has confirmed that these narrations have come to us in an uninterrupted (*mutawātir*) succession. All these noble Ṣaḥābah رضى الله عنهم اجمعين have declared that 'Ākhirah' (Hereafter) in this verse refers to the grave and the verse itself relates to the reward and punishment of the grave.

That man, after his death and burial, lives again, answers the questions asked by the angels, then the coming of reward or punishment as a result of success or failure in this test has been mentioned in almost ten verses of the Holy Qur'ān, by way of hint; while, in seventy *mutawātir aḥādīth* (those passed on in uninterrupted succession), these have been mentioned very clearly and explicitly - in which there remains no room for a Muslim to doubt. As for the commonplace doubts like - 'in this world of our experience, nobody sees these rewards and punishments' - there is no room here to accomodate detailed answers to them. However, it is quite sufficient to understand that not being able to see something is no proof of its being not present. Nobody sees the Jinn and angels, but they are there. The air is not seen, but it is present there. The deep space which is being probed and examined in our time through rockets and space vehicles was something nobody could see before this, but it did exist. A dreamer dreams of being in some trouble in his dream, even writhes under the pain of punishment, but people around him remain totally unaware of what is happening to him.

As a matter of principle, it can be said that taking one world on the analogy of the conditions prevailing in the other is wrong by itself. When the Creator of the universe has told us through His Rasūl that once we pass on to another world, there is reward and punishment there, it becomes necessary for us to believe in it.

Towards the end of the verse (27), it was said: وَيُضِلُّ اللَّهُ الظَّالِمِينَ (And Allah lets the unjust go astray). It means: As for the believers, Allah Ta'ālā keeps them firm on Kalimah Ṭaiyyibah, the 'stable word' as a result of which things of comfort assemble around them right from the grave. But, the unjust, that is, the disbelievers and polytheists, remain

deprived of this Divine help and support. They cannot answer the questions asked in the grave by angles Munkar and Nakīr correctly. The outcome is that they start experiencing a sort of punishment right from that point onwards.

In the last sentence of verse 27, it was said: *وَفَعَلَ اللَّهُ مَا يَشَاءُ* (And Allah does what He wills). It means that there is no power which can block His intention and will. Revered Ṣaḥābah, Sayyidnā Ubaiyy ibn Ka'b, 'Abdullāh ibn Mas'ūd and Ḥudhayfah ibn Yamān رضى الله عنهم اجمعين have said: For a believer, it is mandatory to believe that everything received by him or her was received through the intention and will of Allah. Not to have received it was impossible. Similarly, what was not received, it was not possible to have received that. And they said: If you do not believe in it, and place your trust in that, your abode is Hell.

Finally, said in verses 28 and 29 was:

أَلَمْ تَرَ إِلَى الَّذِينَ بَدَّلُوا نِعْمَةَ اللَّهِ كُفْرًا وَأَحَلُّوا قَوْمَهُمْ دَارَ الْبَوَارِ جَهَنَّمَ يَصْلَوْنَهَا وَبِئْسَ الْقَرَارُ

Have you not seen those who changed the favour of Allah with disbelief and landed their people in the house of destruction, the Jahannam? They shall enter it. And it is an evil abode.

Here, *نِعْمَةُ اللَّهِ* (the favour of Allah) could mean the common physical blessings of Allah Ta'ālā. These are tangible and perceptible and relate to outward benefits of human beings such as food, drink, land, home and things like that. Then it could also mean spiritual blessings and favours as well which have come from Allah Ta'ālā for the guidance of human beings, for example, the prophets, the scriptures, and the signs of Divine power and wisdom which have been placed in every inch of the human existence, and in its countless creations, and in the heavens and its unfathomable and incomprehensible universe. All these serve as logistics for the guidance of human beings.

These two kinds of blessings and favours demanded that human beings should have recognized the greatness and the power of Allah Ta'ālā, been grateful to His gifts and devoted to His command. But, the disbelievers and the polytheists elected to shun gratitude and obedience and opted for ingratitude and disobedience. The result was that they led their people to their mutual abode of destruction, that is, in Hell.

The Lesson given by these verses

Described in these verses is the greatness, virtues, blissfulness and fruitfulness of the belief in the Oneness of Allah and in the Kalimah Ṭaiyyibah: لا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ (*lā ilāha illallāh*). Also identified there are the ill effect and evil outcome of refusing to believe in them. It goes without saying that Tauḥīd, the belief in the Oneness of Allah, is an everlasting treasure which is full of *barakah* in many ways. In the present world of our experience, it brings Divine support with it, and which continues after that too, in the 'Ākhirah and the grave. And the act of rejecting them amounts to changing what was the blessing and favour of Allah into what is punishment.

Verses 30 - 34

وَجَعَلُوا لِلَّهِ أَنْدَادًا لِيُضِلُّوا عَنْ سَبِيلِهِ ۖ قُلْ تَمَتَّعُوا فَإِنَّ مَصِيرَكُمْ إِلَى
النَّارِ ﴿٣٠﴾ قُلْ لِعِبَادِيَ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا يُقِيمُوا الصَّلَاةَ وَيُنْفِقُوا مِمَّا
رَزَقْنَاهُمْ سِرًّا وَعَلَانِيَةً مِّنْ قَبْلِ أَنْ يَأْتِيَ يَوْمٌ لَا بَيْعَ فِيهِ وَلَا خِلَالٌ ﴿٣١﴾
اللَّهُ الَّذِي خَلَقَ السَّمُوتِ وَالْأَرْضَ وَأَنْزَلَ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ مَاءً فَأَخْرَجَ
بِهِ مِنَ الثَّمَرَاتِ رِزْقًا لَّكُمْ ۖ وَسَخَّرَ لَكُمُ الْفُلْكَ لِتَجْرِيَ فِي الْبَحْرِ
بِأَمْرِهِ ۖ وَسَخَّرَ لَكُمُ الْأَنْهَارَ ﴿٣٢﴾ وَسَخَّرَ لَكُمُ الشَّمْسَ وَالْقَمَرَ دَائِبَيْنِ ۖ
وَسَخَّرَ لَكُمُ اللَّيْلَ وَالنَّهَارَ ﴿٣٣﴾ وَإِنكُم مِّنْ كُلِّ مَسْأَلَةٍ مُّؤَمَّةٌ ۖ وَإِن
تَعُدُّوا نِعْمَتَ اللَّهِ لَا تَحْصُوهَا ۗ إِنَّ الْإِنسَانَ لَظَلُومٌ كَفَّارٌ ﴿٣٤﴾

And they have set up partners with Allah, so that they may mislead (the people) from His path. Say, "Enjoy (for a while). Then your ultimate journey is to the Fire." [30]

Say to My believing servants that they should establish Ṣalāh and spend from what We have given to them, secretly and openly, before there comes a day in which there is neither trade nor friendship. [31]

Allah is the One who created the heavens and the earth and sent down water from the sky, then brought forth therewith sustenance for you out of the produce, and

subjugated the ships for you so that they may sail in the sea with His command, and subjugated for you the rivers. [32] And He subjugated for you the sun and the moon, moving constantly, and subjugated for you the day and the night, [33] and He gave you whatever you asked for. And if you count the bounties of Allah, you cannot count them all. Surely, man is very unjust, very ungrateful. [34]

Commentary

Appearing at the beginning of Sūrah Ibrāhīm there were subjects related to the mission of messengers and prophets, and to the states of one's ultimate return, and to the Hereafter. Mentioned after that was the commendation of the belief in Tauḥīd, the Oneness of Allah and, along with it, a condemnation of the profession of disbelief and the ascription of partners in the divinity of Allah which was clarified through examples. Then, those who adopted the later attitude were censured for the reason that they, rather than being grateful for the blessings of Allah Ta'ālā, chose to take the way of ingratitude and rejection.

Out of the verses cited above, the first deplores the behaviour of disbelievers and polytheists and points out to their evil end. The second verse describes the distinction of believers and tells them to abide by some Divine injunctions in order that they can fulfill the obligation of gratitude. In the third, fourth and fifth verses (32-34), by mentioning the great blessings of Allah Ta'ālā, people have been induced that they should not channelize and consume these blessings to promote acts of disobedience to Allah.

The Explanation of Verses

The word: **أَنْدَادُ** (*andād*) is the plural of **نِدٍّ** (*nidd*) which means like and equal. Idols are called '*andād*' because the disbelievers, through their deeds, used to regard them the like or equal of God. The word: **تَمَتُّعٌ** (*ta-mattu'*) appearing in verse 30 means the driving of temporary benefit out of something. The verse censures the erratic view of disbelievers in that they had set up idols as partners with Allah, and the Holy Prophet ﷺ was asked to warn these people of their coming end. Enjoy the blessings of the mortal world for a while, they were told, but their ultimate abode is the fire of Hell.

In the second verse (31), the Holy Prophet ﷺ has been asked:

(Though, the disbelievers of Makkah have turned their backs on the favour of Allah and have chosen the way of infidelity, a strange exchange indeed, so then) 'you tell my believing servants that they should establish Ṣalāh and be particular about it, and spend in the way of Allah from the sustenance We have given to them, spending it both secretly and openly.' This verse carries significant glad tidings for all believing servants of Allah, and showers on them a great honour indeed. To begin with, Allah Ta'ālā has addressed them as 'His servants.' Then, He attributes the quality of faith to them. And then, He tells them how they can achieve eternal peace and comfort and honour, which is: Be particular and punctual in offering Ṣalāh. Avoid being sluggish when the time of Ṣalāh becomes due. Do not fall short in observing it as true to its required etiquette. And spend out of the sustenance given to you in My way as well. Here, both forms of spending have been declared to be permissible. This can be done secretly or openly. It means that Ṣadaqah and Khayrāt (charities in the way of Allah) can be given in a way that no one knows about it, or these can be done in a way that others could get to know about it. Some 'Ulamā say that the obligatory Zakāh and Ṣadaqatul-Fiṭr should be given openly so that others are prompted to do the same. As for voluntary (Nafl) Ṣadaqah and Khayrāt, it is better to give these secretly, so that there remains no danger of having done it for the sake of recognition and fair name. However, it all depends on one's intention (Niyyah) and attending conditions. If by doing it openly and publicly, there emerges the least likelihood of having done it for the sake of name and fame, the intrinsic merit of the charity (Ṣadaqah) so given is destroyed, whether obligatory (Farḍ) or voluntary (Nafl). If the intention is that others may also be induced to do the same, then, open and pronounced giving is permissible both in what is obligatory (Farḍ) and what is voluntary (Nafl).

Said in the last sentence of verse 31 was: *مِنْ قَبْلِ أَنْ يَأْتِيَ يَوْمٌ لَا بَيْعَ فِيهِ وَلَا خِلَالٍ* (before there comes a day in which there is neither trade nor friendship). The word: *خِلَالٍ* (*khilāl*) used here can be taken as the plural form of *خُلَّةٌ* (*khullah*) which means selfless friendship. Then, this word could also be taken as a verbal noun of the derived form of *مُفَاعَلَةٌ* (*mufā'alah*), such as *qitāl*, *difā'* etc. In that case, it would mean a friendship between two persons which is mutual and sincere. This sentence relates to both the in-

junctions of Ṣalāh and Ṣadaqah described above.

The core sense of the injunction is that now is the time to act. Allah Ta'ālā has blessed you with the necessary strength and time to make your Ṣalāh. And if you have missed any of your Ṣalāh in the past due to negligence, make amends and do the *qaḍā'* (replacement of missed Ṣalāh) for it. Similarly, your wealth is in your possession today and by spending it in the way of Allah you can make it work for you particularly for the good of your eternal life. But, lest you forget, the day is coming when both these options will be taken away from you. Neither will your bodies remain active enough to make your Ṣalāh, nor will you have any wealth in your possession which you could use to pay for rights wasted. And on that day, there is going to be no buying and selling, no transactions through which you could buy something, through which you could expiate for shortcomings and sins. And on that day, mutual friendships and personal relationships will not work as well. No friend, no matter how dear, will be able to carry the burden of sins committed by another, nor will he find any way to somehow remove the punishment due against him.

The word: يوم (yowm: a day) obviously means the day of Resurrection (Al-Ḥashr) and the day of Doom (Al-Qiyāmah). Then, it could also be said that it may be the day of one's death because all these signs start showing up immediately from the time of death when one is left without any ability to do anything, nor does wealth stay in the possession of its owner ready to leave the world of his experience behind.

Injunctions and Instructions

As for the statement that no friendship will work for anyone on the day of Qiyāmah (31), it means what will not work there will be friendships based solely on material interests. But, those who maintain friendships and relationships for the sake of Allah and for what is done to serve the interests of His revealed religion will still work at that time as well, for the good servants of Allah who are accepted in His sight will intercede on behalf of others as it has been reported in many *aḥādīth*. And the Qur'ān itself says: 'those who were friends to each other in the life of the world will turn into enemies to one another wishing to put the blame for their sin on a friend and absolve themselves of it, except those who fear Allah - 43:67.' This is so because there too the people of Taqwā,

those who act right in fear of Allah, will be able to put in a good word for each other by way of helping them out.

In the third, fourth and fifth verses (32-34), after recounting the major blessings of Allah Ta'ālā, human beings have been invited to worship and obey Him. They are told that it is Allah alone who has created the heavens and the earth on which depends the emergence and survival of human existence. Then, He sent water down from the sky through which He created produce of many kinds so that they can serve as sustenance for them. The word: *الْأَمْثَرَاتُ* (*ath-thamarāt*) is the plural form of *ثَمَرَةٌ* (*thamarah*) which is the end product of everything. Therefore, included under '*ath-thamarāt*' is everything which becomes for human beings their food, dress or a home to live in - because, the word: *رِزْقٌ* (*rizq*) translated as 'sustenance' in this verse covers all human needs. (Maḥzarī)

After that it was said that Allah Ta'ālā has subjugated boats and ships to work for you for they move over the waters with His command. The word: *سَخَّرَ* (*sakhhkharā*) appearing in this verse means that Allah Ta'ālā has made the use of these things easy on you. Of course, there is wood and steel and the instrumentation and technology to build boats and ships, but when it comes to having the intelligence and ability to use them correctly and expertly, it must be admitted that they were all given by Him. Therefore, those who feel proud of having invented, manufactured or produced things like that should better think twice and feel shy of ascribing all credit of such innovations to themselves. The simple reason is that things used in this process are things none of which was created by them, nor they could. How can someone who works with wood, iron, copper and things like that, utilizes them to serve his end product and then goes about declaring himself as its inventor? Otherwise, if we were to look at hard reality, it will not be difficult to realize that this very existence of ours, our hands and feet, our mind and our intelligence are not what we have made or invented.

After that, it was said that 'We have subjugated the sun and the moon for you' as they both keep moving, always in the same state. The word: *دَائِبِينَ* (*dā'ibayn*) is a derivation from *دَابٌّ* *da'b* which means habit. The sense is that moving at all times and under all conditions has been made the habit of these two planets as it never happens contrary to that. The expression: *سَخَّرَ لَكُمْ* (*sakhhkharā lakum*: He subjugated for you) does

not mean that they should be moving on your command. Had the sun and the moon been subjugated for human beings in a way that they would be moving under human command, then, there would have been mutual differences among them with the result that one of them would demand that the sun should better rise today two hours later than usual because he had too much work to do in the night. And the other would want to have it rise two hours earlier than usual because he had too many daytime jobs at hand. Therefore, the great Lord did, in a way, subjugate the sun and the moon for human beings, but He did so in the sense that they have been subjugated to serve human beings all the time and under all conditions under a wise Divine arrangement - not that their rising and setting and their speed become subservient to human pleasure.

Similarly, the statement that 'We have subjugated the night and the day for you' also means that both of them have been put in the service of human beings to provide convenience and comfort.

Then, in the first sentence of verse 34, it was said: **وَأَنشَأَكُمْ مِنْ كُلِّ مَآسَأٍ لُتُمُوهُ** (And He gave you whatever you asked for) - though, what Allah Ta'ālā is pleased to give does not depend on being asked by someone for, the truth of the matter is, that we had never asked for our existence itself. This is what He gave to us in His infinite grace without the asking.

Similarly, who had raised hands of prayer that the skies, the earth, the moon, the sun and so many things other than them be created for us? The Master just gave all this to us without our asking for them. Therefore, Al-Qāḍī Al-Bayḍāwī has explained the meaning of this statement by saying: 'Allah Ta'ālā has given you everything which is worth asking for, even if you have not actually asked for it'. But, should it be that the meaning intended here is what the words literally suggest, still then, it poses no problem - for what man generally asks for is usually given to him anyway. However, wherever that which he asks for is not given to him in the outward form it was sought, then, in that there is some expedient consideration for the person asking or for the rest of the world, something he does not know about. But, He who is All-Knowing and All-Aware, He knows that, should that which he is asking for were to be given to him, it would become for him or for his family or for the whole world - a curse. In a situation like this, not giving what has been

asked for becomes, in itself, a great blessing. But man, because of his lack of knowledge, cannot realize that, therefore, he feels disappointed.

In the next sentence of verse 34, it was said: **وَأِنْ تَعَدُّوا نِعْمَتَ اللَّهِ لَا تَحْصُوهَا** (And if you count the bounties of Allah, you cannot count them all) that is, even if all human beings combined together were to count them, they would still remain uncountable. A human being is, as is, a little world, per se. In his or her eyes, nose, ears, hands, feet and in every joint, rather in every muscle and vein, hidden there are endless blessings through which this wonderful walking plant pulsating with hundreds of very delicate micro-machines keeps busy doing all sorts of things. Then, we have the mind-boggling range of Divine creations, up, on and down our earth, in seas and mountains which, despite the revealing research done in modern times and despite the devotion of thousands of experts who have spent their lives trying to determine such life forms, still remain undocumented or unidentified. Then, there is our own concept of Divine blessings whereby we tend to take things which are generally considered as blessings in a positive and perceptible way. In fact, blessings are not restricted by such a definition. If we remain safe from diseases, hardships, pain, loss and sorrows, that is a standing blessing in its own right. A person may suffer from so many diseases or discomforts of body and soul in this life and he or she could hardly be expected to keep a count of all that. From this we can guess that it is just impossible for anyone to count out the full array of the blessings, bounties and favours of Allah Ta'ālā.

Justice demanded that, in return for these countless blessings, equally countless acts of obedience to Allah and equally countless demonstrations of gratitude to Him should have been made mandatory. But, Allah Ta'ālā, in His infinite grace, showed leniency towards intrinsic human weakness. The option granted was: When man looks at reality and confesses that fulfilling the demands of the obligatory gratitude is not within his control, then, this very confession has been declared to be sufficient as the alternate of the ideal fulfillment of the obligation of gratitude - as was said by Allah Ta'ālā when Sayyidnā Dāwūd **عليه السلام** made a similar confession: **الآن قد شكرت يا داود** which means that his making this confession is sufficient to show his gratefulness.

At the end of the verse (34), it was said: **إِنَّ الْإِنْسَانَ لَظَلُومٌ كَفَّارٌ** (Surely, man

is very unjust, very ungrateful). It means that he should face hardship with patience, keep his words and feelings free from any complaint thinking that the fate he faces has come from a wise Master and that too, being in His infinite Wisdom is nothing but a blessing, and when he is blessed with what is good and comforting, let him be thankful for it from his heart both verbally and practically - as is the dictate of justice. But, common human habit works differently from this norm. A little discomfort or pain would make them lose patience and go about broadcasting their problem. And if they find some blessing or a little wealth, they would get intoxicated with it and forget all about Allah Ta'ālā, their Benefactor. Therefore, in a verse appearing earlier (5), the attribute of sincere believers has been identified as Ṣabbār (very patient) and Shakūr (very grateful).

Verses 35 -41

وَاذْ قَالَ اِبْرٰهِيْمُ رَبِّ اجْعَلْ هٰذَا الْبَلَدَ اٰمِنًا وَّاجْنُبْنِيْ وَبَنِيَّ اَنْ نَّعْبُدَ
 الْاَصْنَامَ ﴿٣٥﴾ رَبِّ اِنَّهُمْ اضَلُّنَا كَثِيْرًا مِّنَ النَّاسِ ۖ فَمَنْ تَبِعَنِىْ فَاِنَّهٗ
 مِنِّىْ ۚ وَمَنْ عَصَانِىْ فَاِنَّكَ غَفُوْرٌ رَّحِيْمٌ ﴿٣٦﴾ رَبَّنَا اِنِّىْ اَسْكَنْتُ مِنْ
 ذُرِّيَّتِيْ بُوَادٍ غَيْرِ ذٰى زَرْعٍ عِنْدَ بَيْتِكَ الْمُحَرَّمِ رَبَّنَا لِيُقِيْمُوا الصَّلٰوةَ
 فَاجْعَلْ اَفْئِدَةً مِّنَ النَّاسِ تَهْوٰى اِلَيْهِمْ وَاَرْزُقْهُمْ مِّنَ الثَّمَرٰتِ لَعَلَّهُمْ
 يَشْكُرُوْنَ ﴿٣٧﴾ رَبَّنَا اِنَّكَ تَعْلَمُ مَا نَخْفٰى وَمَا نُعَلِنُ ۚ وَمَا يَخْفٰى عَلٰى
 اللّٰهِ مِنْ شَيْءٍ فِى الْاَرْضِ وَلَا فِى السَّمَآءِ ﴿٣٨﴾ اَلْحَمْدُ لِلّٰهِ الَّذِىْ
 وَهَبَ لِىْ عَلٰى الْكِبَرِ اِسْمٰعِيْلَ وَاِسْحٰقَ ۚ اِنَّ رَبِّىْ لَسَمِيْعُ الدُّعَاۤءِ ﴿٣٩﴾
 رَبِّ اجْعَلْنِىْ مُقِيْمَ الصَّلٰوةِ وَمِنْ ذُرِّيَّتِىْ ۖ رَبَّنَا وَتَقَبَّلْ دُعَاۤءِ ﴿٤٠﴾ رَبَّنَا
 اغْفِرْ لِىْ وَلِوَالِدَيَّ وَلِلْمُؤْمِنِيْنَ يَوْمَ يَقُوْمُ الْحِسَابُ ﴿٤١﴾

And when Ibrāhīm said, "My Lord, make this city peaceful, and keep me and my children away from worshipping idols. [35] My Lord, they have certainly misled many a people. So, the one who follows me is surely mine, and the one who disobeys me, then You are Most Forgiving,

Very Merciful. [36]

Our Lord, I have settled some of my children in a valley of no vegetation, close to Your sanctified House, so that, Our Lord, they may establish Ṣalāh. So make hearts of a number of people yearn toward them, and provide them with fruits, so that they may be grateful. [37] Our Lord, surely You know what we conceal and what we reveal. And hidden from Allah is nothing whatsoever, neither in the earth nor in the heavens. [38] Praise be to Allah who, despite my old age, blessed me with Ismā'īl and Ishāq. Surely, my Lord is the One who hears the prayer. [39] My Lord, make me steadfast in Ṣalāh, and from among my children as well. And, Our Lord, grant my prayer. [40] Our Lord, forgive me and my parents and all believers on the day when reckoning shall take place." [41]

Commentary

Stated in the previous verses was the rational strength and cardinal position of Tauḥīd, the belief in the Oneness of Allah. And also mentioned there in contrast was the gross ignorance of Shirk, the ascribing of partners in the pristine divinity of Allah, and a condemnation thereof. Among the group of prophets عليهم السلام, the most successful Jihād waged to establish pure monotheism was that of Sayyidnā Ibrāhīm عليه السلام. Therefore, the religion preached by him is known particularly as the upright religion.

In view of this, reference has been made to the story of Sayyidnā Ibrāhīm عليه السلام in the cited verses. However, there is another reason too. In a previous verse (28): الَّذِينَ بَدَّلُوا نِعْمَتَ اللَّهِ كُفْرًا (those who changed the favour of Allah with disbelief), condemned were people from among the disbelievers of Makkah who had changed faith for disbelief and Tauḥīd (Oneness of Allah) for Shirk (ascribing of partners to Allah) because that was what their forefathers have been doing. They have been told in these verses about the belief and behaviour of their patriarch, Sayyidnā Ibrāhīm عليه السلام so that these people so eager to follow the lead of their ancestors would just look at this model and would, hopefully, abstain from their disbelief. (Al-Baḥr Al-Muḥīṭ)

And as it is already clear to us that by describing the stories and conditions of blessed prophets, the Qur'ān never aims to narrate their histo-

ry only. Instead of that, in them there are guiding principles for every department of human life. It is to make them become available continuously that these events about prophets are repeated in the Qur'an time and again.

At this place, there are in the first verse (35) two prayers made by Sayyidnā Ibrāhīm عليه السلام: (1) رَبِّ اجْعَلْ هَذَا الْبَلَدَ آمِنًا : 'My Lord, make this city (of Makkah) peaceful.' This prayer appears in Sūrah Al-Baqarah (2:126) as well. But, there the word: بَلَدٌ (*balad* : city) appears as: بَلَدًا (*baladan*) without the definite article *Alif Lām* which means an indefinite city. The reason is that this prayer belonged to a time when the city of Makkah was not inhabited. Therefore, the words of the prayer made were general when he said: 'My Lord, make this a city of peace.'

In the prayer which he made when Makkah was already a populated city, he made a definite reference to the city of Makkah saying: 'My Lord, make this city peaceful.'

(2) The second prayer made by him was: 'and keep me and my children away from worshipping idols.'

Though, prophets on whom be peace are protected by Allah, so Shirk, idol-worship, or a sin cannot issue forth from them. But, in this prayer, Sayyidnā Ibrāhīm عليه السلام has included himself as well. The reason for this is either that prophets too live under a constant fear of being in danger, or that his main purpose was to pray for the safety of his children against the danger of disbelief and idol-worship. It was to impress his children with the gravity of the matter that he included himself too within the prayer.

Allah *jalla thanā'uh* granted the prayer of His 'friend.' His children remained protected from Shirk and idol-worship. This brings up a question. The people of Makkah are generally from among the progeny of Sayyidnā Ibrāhīm عليه السلام. Idol-worship was very much present with them. Tafsīr Al-Baḥr Al-Muḥīṭ answers it on the authority of Sufyān ibn 'Uyaynah that no one from among the progeny of Sayyidnā Ismā'īl عليه السلام did really take to idol-worship. In fact, when people of the tribe of Jurhum took over Makkah and expelled the children of Sayyidnā Ismā'īl عليه السلام from the Ḥaram, they carried away with them some stones from there out of love and respect for the sacred place. These they used to

keep as a memento of the sacred House of Allah before them when they worshipped or went round them making Ṭawāf. Initially, in doing so, they had no desire to turn back from Allah. They thought that the way making prayers turning towards Baytullah or making Ṭawāf round it was nothing but devoting to the worship of Allah, so when they turn to that stone from there and make their Ṭawāf round it, that would not be counter to the worship of Allah. After a passage of time, this very method became the cause of idol-worship.

In the second verse (36), he gives the reason for making this prayer. He said that he sought refuge from idol-worship because it has led many a people astray. He said so because he had seen his father and his people falling victims to the custom of idol-worship which had left them deprived of all possibilities of betterment in their lives.

In the closing sentence of the verse, it was said: *فَمَنْ تَبِعَنِي فَإِنَّهُ مِنِّي وَمَنْ عَصَانِي فَإِنَّكَ غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ* (So, the one who follows me is surely mine, and the one who disobeys me, then You are Most Forgiving, Very Merciful). It means that one who keeps faith and abides by good deeds could obviously hope to be blessed, but should there be someone who disobeys his prophet, then, his case rests with the forgiveness and mercy of Allah. If disobedience referred to here is taken to be restricted to evils deeds, a form of disobedience to Allah in practice, then, the meaning is obvious, that is, they too could hope to be forgiven by His good grace. And if disobedience is taken to mean disbelief, denial and rejection, then, equally obvious is the fact that Sayyidnā Ibrāhīm عليه السلام had already been told that there was no forgiveness for the Kāfir (disbeliever) and Mushrik (one who ascribes partners to Allah) and that he should not intercede on behalf of them. After that, expressing the hope of their forgiveness cannot be correct. Therefore, in Al-Baḥr Al-Muḥīṭ, it was said: At this place, Sayyidnā Ibrāhīm عليه السلام has not used words which would suggest a recommendation or prayer. He did not say that they be forgiven. Nevertheless, he was a prophet with abounding mercy which encompasses his disbelievers too. Every prophet wishes from the deep recesses of his heart that no one should ever be subjected to Divine punishment, not even a disbeliever. So, it was this elemental wish of his that he expressed when he said: 'then You are Most Forgiving, Very Merciful.' He did not say precisely that they be forgiven and treated mercifully. This is similar to what

Sayyidnā 'Īsā عليه السلام said about the disbelievers of his community: وَإِنْ تَغْفِرْ لَهُمْ فَإِنَّكَ أَنْتَ الْعَزِيزُ الْحَكِيمُ (and if You forgive them, then, You are the Mighty, the Wise - 5:118) which, in other words, would mean: If You were to forgive them, then, You have the Might and the Wisdom. You can do everything and there is no one to stop You.

Thus, these two blessed souls did not take the initiative of recommending forgiveness for disbelievers as it was contrary to the etiquette due before Allah. But, at the same time, they also did not say that those disbelievers be punished by Him. Instead of doing that, they remained respectful yet, in a manner of their own, gave vent to their elemental wish that they too may be forgiven.

Injunctions and Instructions

As for a *du'ā'*, (prayer) everyone makes it. But, everyone does not know how to. The prayers made by the blessed prophets are lesson-oriented. They teach us how to ask. And they tell us what is worth asking for. This prayer by Sayyidnā Ibrāhīm عليه السلام is in two parts. The first part pleads that Makkah be made the city of peace, free of all security threats, while the second part seeks that he and his children be delivered from idol-worship for ever.

If we think about it, these are the two very basic principles of human betterment - because, should human beings remain insecure where they live or remain under the apprehension that their country would be attacked by an enemy, their lives can never be pleasant, neither materially, nor spiritually. Everything done in this world, for profit or pleasure, depends on peace. There can be no two opinions at least about that. A person threatened by all sorts of dangers to his peace and security would naturally find the best of blessings he is surrounded with - dining and retiring in palaces, villas and mansions with possession and wealth abounding - all too sour to savor.

Even in terms of one's religious orientation, one can show his obedience to Divine commands only when one has the necessary peace to do so.

Therefore, in the first prayer made by Sayyidnā Ibrāhīm عليه السلام, included there are all aspects of human well-being, whether material or spiritual. Through this one sentence uttered by the Friend of Allah, Sayy-

idnā Ibrāhīm, may the blessing of Allah and peace be upon him, he has asked for his children everything that matters in this world.

We also learn from this prayer that emotional concern for one's children, and the arrangement of economic sufficiency and comfort for them is one of the obligations placed on the father, to the best of his ability and capacity. To make efforts for this purpose is not contrary to (what has been said about) *Zuhd* (having no greed for the worldly pleasures).

Then comes the second prayer. This too has great comprehensiveness because Shirk and idol-worship are sins for which there is no forgiveness, therefore, he has asked for being shielded against them. If a sin gets to be committed after that, it can also be expiated through other deeds, and such sins could also be forgiven through someone's intercession. And if we take the 'worship of idols' mentioned in the text in its broader sense as taken by the noble mystics, that is, everything which makes man heedless to Allah is his idol, and overcome by its love, when man takes the initiative and disobeys Allah, this then is, in a way, its worship. So, in this prayer, that is, to be kept away from idol-worship, there is a coverage of being kept away from all sins. It is in this sense that some noble mystics of Islam have admonished their self against heedlessness and disobedience to the Creator; or, as the great gnostic Rūmī says: 'Every (evil) desire is an idol in your way.'

Brimming with wisdom, there is another prayer of Sayyidnā Ibrāhīm عليه السلام which appears in the third verse (37) as follows: رَبَّنَا إِنِّي أَسْكَنْتُ : 'Our Lord, I have settled some of my children in a valley of no vegetation [nor any other obvious life support system] close to Your sanctified House, so that, Our Lord, they may establish Ṣalāh. So, make hearts of a number of people yearn towards them [to make them familiar with each other], and provide them with fruits, so that they may be grateful.'

The event which marks the making of this prayer by Sayyidnā Ibrāhīm عليه السلام goes back to the time when Allah Ta'ālā intended to have the edifice of Baytullah which was destroyed in the Deluge during the time of Sayyidnā Nūḥ عليه السلام reconstructed. He chose His 'friend,' Sayyidnā Ibrāhīm عليه السلام for this mission, arranging for him to migrate from Syria with wife, Sayyidah Hājira and son, Sayyidnā Ismā'il عليه السلام and settle down in that barren place. This he was appointed to do.

It appears in the Ṣaḥīḥ of Al-Bukhārī that Sayyidnā Ismā'īl عليه السلام was an infant at that time. Sayyidnā Ibrāhīm عليه السلام, as ordered, had him and his mother, Sayyidah Hājira stay near the present Baytullah and the well of Zamzam. At that time, this place was an open and barren ground surrounded by hills. There was no water and no habitation in sight. Sayyidnā Ibrāhīm عليه السلام had thoughtfully put some food in a provision-bag and water in a water-bag.

Thereafter, Sayyidnā Ibrāhīm عليه السلام was commanded to return to Syria. The spot where he received this command was the spot from where he started his journey as commanded. That there was the natural effect of having to leave his wife and infant son in this wilderness on him will become evident from the prayer which he made a little later, but he did not tolerate the idea of making the least delay in carrying out the Divine command, not even for a few moments which he could have used to inform Sayyidah Hājira and say a few words of comfort to her.

As a result, when Sayyidah Hājira saw him going away, she repeatedly called from behind him wondering why would he leave them in that manner and in a place which had no human being around nor was there anything which could help them survive. But, the 'friend' of Allah did not look back. Thereupon, Sayyidah Hājira realized that one who is the 'friend' of Allah cannot betray them in that manner. Perhaps, this is nothing but a command from Allah Ta'ālā. So, she called again and asked: 'Has Allah Ta'ālā commanded you to leave this place?' Sayyidnā Ibrāhīm عليه السلام turned his face and said: 'Yes.' Hearing this, Sayyidah Hājira said: 'إِذَا لَا يُضِيعُنَا' that is, 'Now it does not matter. Our Master, who has commanded you to leave this place, will certainly not let us be wasted away.'

Sayyidnā Ibrāhīm عليه السلام kept going ahead until he reached close to a hill from where he could no more see Sayyidah Hājira and Sayyidnā Ismā'īl عليهما السلام. That was the time when he turned his attention towards Baytullah and prayed in the words mentioned in the verse (37).¹ Many religious instructions and rulings issue forth from this prayer of

1. According to this interpretation, it is only the prayer mentioned in Verse (37) that was made at this time. As for the prayer mentioned in the verse (35) it was made at a later stage, when Makkah was already a populated city. Therefore, there is no contradiction between this statement and the comment made on the verse 35. (Editor)

Sayyidnā Ibrāhīm عليه السلام. These are being taken up in some details as given below.

The Wisdom of Sayyidnā Ibrāhīm's Prayer

1. We see that Sayyidnā Ibrāhīm عليه السلام has accomplished two things very distinctly. On the one hand, he fulfills his obligation to his status as the Khalīl or Friend of Allah. When and where he was commanded to leave for the country of Syria, he took no time in leaving his wife and infant son in a desolate wilderness. When he was saying yes to the Divine command, he did not show the least hesitation. He did what he was asked to do right away. He did not tolerate the idea of postponing or delaying even to the natural limit whereby he would first go to his blessed wife, say some words of comfort to her and tell her that he is under Divine orders to leave about which she should not worry. This he did not do. What he did was: When and where came the Divine command, he obeyed it and moved ahead right on.

On the other hand, he did not neglect the rights of his family on him and paid the debt of their love in his own way. Once he could see them no more from behind a hill on his way, he prayed before Allah Ta'ālā that they be protected and blessed with peace. Thus, he had asked good life for them because he was confident, and at peace with himself. He knew that a prayer made after having carried out the Divine command first would never be rejected by the merciful Lord. And this is what happened actually. The helpless infant and his equally helpless mother found shelter. Not only that they settled there all alone and by themselves, a whole city flowered with people around them and for their sake; and furthermore, the matter did not end at the fulfillment of the needs of their lives lived in peace, but it is for their sake that the doors of all sorts of blessing are still open to the people of Makkah.

This is prophetic steadfastness, and the beauty of balance; when considering one aspect, they would never ignore the other. The prophets are not like common mystics who are overpowered by the state they are in (*maghlūb al-ḥāl*). Prophets educate. It is their education which goes on to make man perfect, universal.

Now, let us go to some significant statements made in this prayer. They are from verse 37 and are being taken up in the order they appear

there.

2. **غَيْرِ ذِي زَرْعٍ** (valley of no vegetation): When Sayyidnā Ibrāhīm عليه السلام was commanded by Allah Ta'ālā that he should leave his infant son and his mother in that barren land and go to Syria, he had become certain from the command itself that Allah Ta'ālā would not let them perish, instead, they would, at least, be provided with water somehow. That is why he did not say: **بَوَادٍ غَيْرِ ذِي مَاءٍ** (in a valley with no water). What he said was: **غَيْرِ ذِي زَرْعٍ** (in a valley of no vegetation). Therefore, he requested that they be blessed with 'fruits' - even if they had to be brought in from somewhere else. This is the reason why Makkah al-Mukarramah does not have any significant areas of cultivation even to this day. But, fruits from all over the world, the produce and product of things of all sorts reach there in such numbers and variety that it would be difficult to find a similar arrangement in many cities. (Al-Baḥr Al-Muḥīṭ)

3. The next sentence: **عِنْدَ بَيْتِكَ الْمُحَرَّمِ** (close to Your sanctified House) proves that the foundation of Baytullah had been laid out before the appearance of Sayyidnā Ibrāhīm عليه السلام as proved by the leading commentator, Al-Qurṭubī on the authority of several narrations under his commentary on Sūrah Al-Baqarah. According to him, the structure of Baytullah was first raised by Sayyidnā Ādam عليه السلام at the time when he was sent to the earth and was made to reach at this place from the Mountain of Sarandip through a miracle. Angel Jibrā'īl directed him to the site of Baytullah. Accordingly, Sayyidnā Ādam عليه السلام raised its structure. He and his children used to do Ṭawāf round it until came the Deluge during the time of Sayyidnā Nūḥ عليه السلام when the sacred Baytullah was raised up (as trust), but its foundations remained embedded under the earth. Sayyidnā Ibrāhīm عليه السلام was commanded to build the Baytullah anew on the already existing foundations. These were identified and shown to him by Sayyidnā Jibrā'īl. After that, when this Abrahimic structure collapsed during the age of Arab Jāhiliyyah, the Quraysh of that period rebuilt it. When its construction work was in progress, Abū Ṭālib along with the Holy Prophet ﷺ participated in it, which was before he was-made prophet.

Here, Baytullah has been qualified as: **مُحَرَّمٌ** (*muḥarram*) which means 'sanctified,' but could also mean 'protected.' The great Baytullah has both attributes. It has always been sanctified and esteemed, and always

protected from enemies as well.

4. The next statement: يُقِيمُوا الصَّلَاةَ (so that they may establish Ṣalāh) is significant in that it was the first prayer he made soon after mentioning the helplessness of his infant son and his mother. His prayer was that they be made particular and punctual in their obligation of Ṣalāh as due because Ṣalāh is a cumulative receptacle of everything good and blissful in life, mortal or eternal. This tells us that there can be no greater concern, or love or desire for the betterment of children than that they be made to become particular and punctual with their Ṣalāh. Finally, there is something here we should not miss to note. Though, Sayyidnā Ibrāhīm عليه السلام had left behind at that time and at that place only a mother and her child, but the prayer he made was in the plural form. This tells us that Sayyidnā Ibrāhīm عليه السلام had come to know that this place will have a populated city of its own and the line of this child will flourish and go far in time. Therefore, he included all of them in his prayer.

5. In the next sentence: أَفِيدَةً مِنَ النَّاسِ (hearts of a number of people), the word: أَفِيدَةً (*afidah*) is the plural of: فُؤَادَ (*fu'ād*) which means heart. Here, the word: '*afidah*' has been introduced in its indefinite form along with the particle: مِنْ (*min*) which is used for reducing, dividing and portioning. Hence, the meaning is: 'make hearts of a number of people yearn towards them). Tafsīr authority, Mujāhid says: If this reductive particle was not there in this prayer, instead, said there would have been: أَفِيدَةُ النَّاسِ (hearts of the people), then, Muslims, non-Muslims, Jews, Christians, virtually people of the whole world from the East to West would have converged on Makkah, which would have become a cause of inconvenience for them. It was in view of this reality that Sayyidnā Ibrāhīm عليه السلام, in his prayer, used the words: 'make hearts of a number of people yearn towards them.'

6. In the next sentence: وَارْزُقْهُمْ مِنَ الثَّمَرَاتِ (and provide them with fruits), the word: الثَّمَرَاتِ (*ath-thamarāt*) is the plural of: ثَمْرَةً (*thamrah*) which means fruit. Customarily, they refer to fruits which are eaten. Given that sense of 'fruit,' the prayer would mean: 'provide them with all sorts of fruits to eat.'

However, *thamrah* or fruit is also used in the sense of outcome and

produce which is more general than things edible. The outcome of everything beneficial can be called its *thamrah* or fruit. Thus, the fruits of industries would be their products. The fruit of a job or work would be the pay or wages received as a result. In a verse of Sūrah Al-Qaṣaṣ, also used there is the expression: ثَمَرْتُ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ (fruits [or produce] of all things - 28:57). Here, instead of using the word: شَجَرٌ (*shajar* : tree), what has been used is the word: شَيْءٍ (*sha'ii* : thing). Perhaps, this may be indicating that for these people Sayyidnā Ibrāhīm عليه السلام has not simply prayed for the provision of fruits to eat. Rather, the prayer he has made is for the end product of everything which includes the products and produce and use-worthy things of all kinds, and again, with earnest pleading and humble plaint alongwith the recounting of praises for Allah Ta'ālā, then, this would be a manner in which it can be strongly hoped that the prayer will be answered.

Verses 42 - 52

وَلَا تَحْسَبَنَّ اللَّهَ غَافِلًا عَمَّا يَعْمَلُ الظَّالِمُونَ ۚ إِنَّمَا يُؤَخِّرُهُمْ لِيَوْمٍ تَشْخَصُ فِيهِ الْأَبْصَارُ ﴿٤٢﴾ مُهْطِعِينَ مُقْنِعِي رُؤُوسِهِمْ لَا يَرْتَدُّ إِلَيْهِمْ طَرْفُهُمْ ۖ وَأَفْئِدَتُهُمْ هَوَاءٌ ﴿٤٣﴾ وَأَنْذِرِ النَّاسَ يَوْمَ يَأْتِيهِمُ الْعَذَابُ فَيَقُولُ الَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا رَبَّنَا أَخِّرْنَا إِلَىٰ أَجَلٍ قَرِيبٍ ۖ نَحِبْ دَعْوَتَكَ وَتَتَّبِعِ الرُّسُلَ ۚ أَوَلَمْ تَكُونُوا أَقْسَمْتُمْ مِّنْ قَبْلِ مَا لَكُم مِّنْ زَوَالٍ ﴿٤٤﴾ وَسَكَنتُمْ فِي مَسْكِينَ الَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا أَنْفُسَهُمْ وَتَبَيَّنَ لَكُم كَيْفَ فَعَلْنَا بِهِمْ وَضَرَبْنَا لَكُمُ الْأَمْثَالَ ﴿٤٥﴾ وَقَدْ مَكَرُوا مَكْرَهُمْ وَعِنْدَ اللَّهِ مَكْرُهُمْ ۚ وَإِن كَانَ مَكْرُهُمْ لِتَزُولَ مِنْهُ الْجِبَالُ ﴿٤٦﴾ فَلَا تَحْسَبَنَّ اللَّهَ مُخَلِّفًا وَعْدِهِ رُسُلَهُ ۚ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَزِيزٌ ذُو انتِقَامٍ ﴿٤٧﴾ يَوْمَ تُبَدَّلُ الْأَرْضُ غَيْرَ الْأَرْضِ وَالسَّمُوتُ ۚ وَبَرَزُوا لِلَّهِ الْوَاحِدِ الْقَهَّارِ ﴿٤٨﴾ وَتَرَى الْمُجْرِمِينَ يَوْمَئِذٍ مُّقَرَّنِينَ فِي الْأَصْفَادِ ﴿٤٩﴾ سَرَابِيلُهُمْ مِّنْ قَطْرِانٍ وَتَغْشَىٰ وُجُوهُهُمُ النَّارُ ﴿٥٠﴾ لِيَجْزِيَ اللَّهُ كُلَّ نَفْسٍ مَّا كَسَبَتْ ۚ إِنَّ

اللَّهُ سَرِيعُ الْحِسَابِ ﴿٥١﴾ هَذَا بَلَغَ لِلنَّاسِ وَلِيُذْنَرُوا بِهِ وَيَعْلَمُوا أَنَّمَا
هُوَ إِلَهٌ وَاحِدٌ وَلْيَذْكُرُوا الْأَلْبَابَ ﴿٥٢﴾

And never think that Allah is unaware of what the wrongdoers are doing. He is but giving them respite upto a day when the eyes shall remain upraised (in terror). [42] They shall be rushing with their heads raised upward; their eyes shall not return towards them and their hearts shall be hollow. [43]

And warn the people of a day when punishment comes upon them, and the wrongdoers will say, "Our Lord, give us respite for a short period, and we will respond to Your call and will follow the messengers." (Allah will say), "Is it not that you had sworn earlier that you would not have to leave (the world)? [44] And you dwelt in the dwellings of those who wronged themselves, and it became clear to you how We dealt with them, and We put forth for you the examples." [45] And they worked out their plot and whatever they plot is before Allah, even though their plot is such as would move the mountains. [46]

So, do not think that Allah will do against His promise to His messengers. Surely, Allah is Mighty, the Lord of Retribution [47] --- the day on which this earth will be turned into some other earth, and the skies as well. And they all shall appear before Allah, the One, the All-Dominant. [48]

And on that day you will see the culprits shackled together in chains, [49] their shirts of rosin,* and their faces covered with Fire [50] --- so that Allah repays everyone what he earned. Indeed, Allah is swift at reckoning. [51]

This is a message for mankind, so that they (take lesson and) be warned, and so that they may know that He is One God, and so that the people of understanding may take to the advice. [52]

Commentary

Mentioned in Sūrah Ibrāhīm were some details of matters relating to

* Stands for 'Qaṭirān', the original Qur'ānic word which means a highly inflammable oil extracted from the Pine-tree.

prophets and their peoples, the evil end of those who opposed Divine injunctions and, later on, Sayyidnā Ibrāhīm عليه السلام himself, who constructed the Baytullah, and for whose children Allah Ta'ālā made a community rise around them in Makkah al-Mukarramah, and provided for all its inhabitants perfect peace and extraordinary economic facilities, and it is his children, the Banū Ismā'īl, who are the first addressees of the Glorious Qur'ān and the Holy Prophet ﷺ.

In this last section of Sūrah Ibrāhīm, the same people of Makkah have been exhorted to take a lesson from what had happened to past peoples; and, in a nutshell, they have been warned that, should they still not return to their senses, they better be ready to face the horrendous punishment of the day of Qiyāmah.

Initially, the first verse (42) is to comfort the Holy Prophet ﷺ and the oppressed of the world, then, it releases the threat of a severe punishment for all oppressors - that the unjust practitioners of crime should not become carefree because Allah Ta'ālā has given them respite. Let them not be deluded by the idea that Allah is not aware of their wrongdoings for which reason they are flourishing despite their crimes and for which reason nothing unwelcome happens to them, nor does any punishment visit them. This is not true. Instead of all that they presuppose, everything they are doing is all within the sight of Allah Ta'ālā, but He, in His mercy and wisdom, is giving them respite.

In this verse: وَلَا تَحْسَبَنَّ اللَّهَ غَافِلًا (And never think that Allah is unaware of what the wrongdoers are doing), the address is obviously to every such person whom his own negligence, and Shayṭān, have tricked to believe in something like that. And should it be that the Holy Prophet ﷺ himself is the addressee here, still then, the purpose of saying this would be to let the negligent of the community hear it and be warned - because, there exists just no possibility that the Holy Prophet ﷺ would, God forbid, ever think that Allah Ta'ālā is unaware or indifferent to what is happening.

In the second verse (43), it has been said that the postponement of sudden punishment against these unjust people is not any better for them because, ultimately, they will be seized in the great punishment of the Qiyāmah and the 'Ākhirah which will overtake them all of a sudden.

The details of this punishment in the life to come and the horrendous happenings to be experienced there keep appearing right upto the end of the verse:

لَيَوْمٍ تَشْخَصُ فِيهِ الْأَبْصَارُ

A day when the eyes shall remain upraised (in terror).

مُهْطِعِينَ مُقْنِعِي رُؤُوسِهِمْ

They shall be rushing with their heads raised upward.

لَا يَرْتَدُّ إِلَيْهِمْ طَرْفُهُمْ

Their eyes shall not return towards them.

وَأَقْبَدُتُهُمْ هَوَاءَ

And their hearts shall be hollow.

After the shape of things to come upon them has been stated, the address is to the Holy Prophet ﷺ who has been asked to warn his people of the punishment of that day, the day on which the unjust and the wrongdoing will have no choice but to call their Lord for some more time to return to the world they knew so that they could say yes to the call of prophets and follow them this time and may thereby have their deliverance from this punishment. The answer to their request will come from Allah Ta'ālā wherein it will be said: This is what you are saying now. Is it not that you had been giving sworn statements to the effect that your wealth and power shall never part with you, and that you shall go on living in the world just like that, in comfort and luxury, for ever; and is it not that you had rejected the idea that you will live again and that there was a world hereafter?

In verse 45:

وَسَكَنْتُمْ فِي مَسْكَانِ الَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا أَنْفُسَهُمْ وَبَيَّنَ لَكُمْ كَيْفَ فَعَلْنَا بِهِمْ وَضَرَبْنَا لَكُمْ
الْأَمْثَالَ

And you dwelt in the dwelling of those who wronged themselves, and it became clear to you how We dealt with them and We put forth for you the examples,

as obvious, the address is to the Mushriks of Arabia. These were the people the Holy Prophet ﷺ was asked to warn: أَنْذِرِ النَّاسَ (And warn the people

ple - 44). In this address, they have been asked to take their guard against what could happen to them as a result of their heedlessness. They could learn a lesson from what had happened to past peoples. The conditions they faced and the revolutions that overtook them could become their teacher. Yet, it is astonishing that they would still prefer not to learn a lesson - even though, they live in the very homes once occupied by peoples destroyed in punishment and walk around neighbourhoods once walked by them. The truth is that they know by direct observation, and by what some continuing reports have told them that terrible was the punishment which Allah Ta'ālā inflicted on them because of their acts of disobedience. The advice and the examples given here were to bring them to see truth and take the straight path, but it was certainly strange that they would still not listen and learn to act right.

Said in verse 46 was:

وَقَدْ مَكَرُوا مَكْرَهُمْ وَعِنْدَ اللَّهِ مَكْرُهُمْ وَإِنْ كَانَ مَكْرُهُمْ لِتَزُولَ مِنْهُ الْجِبَالُ

And they worked out their plot and whatever they plot is before Allah, even though their plot is such as would move the mountains.

which can be explained further by saying that those people tried to demolish the true faith and put in action their deadliest plans to bring harm to Muslims who had embraced the call of truth. But, all plans made by them, open or concealed, lie exposed before Allah Ta'ālā who is fully aware of them, and comprehensively capable of foiling them - even though, their plots were so precise and lethal that they would have made mountains back out from their place, but finally, nothing worked before the perfect power of Allah Ta'ālā.

The hostile plots and plans mentioned here may possibly mean the plots and plans made by people destroyed in the past, for example, Nimrud, Pharaoh, the people of 'Ād and Thamūd and others. And it is also possible that the text is referring to the Mushriks of Arabia who hatched many deep-seated and far-reaching conspiracies against the Holy Prophet ﷺ, but they were all foiled by Allah Ta'ālā.

There are a good many commentators who have taken the word: إِنَّ (in) appearing in: وَإِنْ كَانَ مَكْرُهُمْ (even though their plot) as a particle of negation and explain the verse to mean that 'though they made many plots

but it was not possible for their plots to make mountains move away from their place - and the mountain here means the high determination of the Holy Prophet ﷺ which remained totally unaffected by any of the moves made by the disbelievers.

After that, it was to let this be heard by the Muslim community, the Holy Prophet ﷺ - or everyone thus addressed - was given a note of caution by saying:

فَلَا تَحْسَبَنَّ اللَّهَ مُخْلِفًا وَعْدِهِ رُسُلَهُ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَزِيزٌ ذُو انْتِقَامٍ

So, do not think that Allah will do against His promise [of support, victory and success] to His messengers. Surely, Allah is Mighty, the Lord of Retribution - 47

and that He would definitely retaliate against the enemies of His messengers and fulfill the promises made to them.

In the verses which appear onwards from here (48-51), the text returns to the awe-inspiring happenings of the day of Qiyāmah. It is said:

يَوْمَ تَبْدُلُ الْأَرْضَ غَيْرَ الْأَرْضِ وَالسَّمَوَاتِ وَبَرَزُوا لِلَّهِ الْوَاحِدِ الْقَهَّارِ

The day on which this earth will be turned into some other earth, and the skies as well. And they all shall appear before Allah, the One, the All-Dominant.

The statement that the earth and the sky will be turned into some other earth and sky may also mean that their distinctive characteristics and appearances will be changed. There are other verses of the Holy Qur'an, and narrations from Ḥadīth, which say that the whole earth will be transformed into a levelled surface having no house, tree, mountain and mound blocking the view, nor shall there remain any cave and abyss. It is this very state of change which the Qur'an refers to elsewhere in the following words: لَا تَرَى فِيهَا عِوَجًا وَلَا أَمْتًا (you will not see in it any crookedness, or curvature - 20:107). It means that things will not remain the way they are. Roads and pathways we see today wind their way past buildings and mountains negotiating all sorts of twists and turns on surfaces high and low. This will change and the whole thing would turn into flat, unobstructed ground.

And this act of changing the earth and the sky could also be taken to

mean that another set of the earth and the sky would be made in the place of the present ones. Out of the narrations of Ḥadīth reported on this subject, only some of them seem to indicate either a change in features only while others suggest a change of the thing itself.

Ḥadīth authority, Al-Baihaqī has reported from Sayyidnā ‘Abdullāh ibn Mas‘ūd ؓ as based on authentic chains of narration that, about this verse, the Holy Prophet ﷺ said: 'The ground of Al-Maḥshar (the plain of Resurrection) will be brand new, radiant white like silver. And this earth surface would be such that no sin would have been committed over it by anyone, and on which no blood belonging to someone killed unjustly would have been shed.' The same subject appears in the Ḥadīth reported in the Musnad of Aḥmad and Tafsīr Ibn Jarīr, as narrated by Sayyidnā Anas ؓ. (Tafsīr Maḥzari)

In the Ṣaḥīḥayn (the two Ṣaḥīḥs) of Al-Bukhārī and Muslim, there is a narration from Sayyidnā Sahl Ibn Sa‘d ؓ which reports that the Holy Prophet ﷺ said: 'On the day of Qiyāmah, people will be resurrected on an earth surface which will be clean and white like refined pita bread with no trace of anything else (such as house, garden, tree, mountain, mound etc.). Al-Biahaqī has reported the same subject from Sayyidnā ‘Abdullāh ibn ‘Abbās ؓ as in his Tafsīr of this particular verse.

And Ḥākim, backed by a strong chain of authority, has reported from a narration of Sayyidnā Jābir ؓ that the Holy Prophet ﷺ said: 'On the day of Qiyāmah, this earth will be stretched like leather so that its wrinkles and crinkles are smoothed out (because of which caves and mountains of the earth would be all levelled down turning it into a flat surface), and at that time gathered on these plains there shall be the whole progeny of Ādam. Such will be the multitude of people that one human being would have only as much land in his or her share as he or she can stand on. Then, I shall be the first to be called on the plains of Resurrection. There I shall fall down in prostration before the Almighty Lord, and when I shall be given the permission to intercede, I shall intercede for the whole creation so that they go through the reckoning of their deeds swiftly.'

This last report obviously seems to indicate that the change made in the earth will be restricted to a change in its physical features, that is, caves, mountains, buildings and trees will not remain there. But, the earth itself will remain as it is. And all other narrations mentioned earlier tell us that the earth of the day of Resurrection (Al-Maḥshar) will be an earth other than the present one. As for the change mentioned in this verse, it means the change of the earth itself.

In Bayān al-Qurʿān, Maulānā Ashraf ʿAlī Thānavī رحمه الله عليه has said that there is no contradiction here. It is possible that the features of the present earth will be changed at the time the first Horn is blown, then people will be transferred to some other earth for the purpose of reckoning of deeds.

A saying of Sayyidnā ʿIkrimah ؓ appearing in the Musnad of ʿAbd ibn al-Ḥumaid and reported in Tafsīr Mazḥarī supports the view given above. The words used there can be translated as: 'This earth will contract and it will have another earth by its side on which people will stand for reckoning.'

As based on a narration of Sayyidnā Thawbān ؓ, it has been reported in the Ṣaḥīḥ of Muslim that a Jewish rabbi came to the Holy Prophet ﷺ and asked him: When this earth is changed, where would people be? He said: They would be in a dark area near the Bridge of Ṣirāt.

From here we also learn that people will be transferred from the present earth over to the other through the Bridge of Ṣirāt. And Ibn Jarīr has reported from several Ṣaḥābah and Ṭabīʿīn in his Tafsīr that the present earth and all its rivers will turn into fire at that time. In other words, all this territory which now holds the population of the world will become the territory of Hell. However, the reality of things is known to Allah Taʿālā alone. A servant of His can do nothing but to live by his commitment to Him and not go about seeking the cause of His workings.

In verses 50 and 51 towards the end, given there is the state in which the people of Jahannam will find themselves. Culprits will be shackled

together in chains, that is, each group huddled separately and then shackled together. And the dress they would be made to wear will be from '*Qaṭirān*' which is a highly inflammable tar-like oil and would catch fire instantly.

Finally, in the last verse (52), it was made clear that the description of conditions to be faced by people on the day of Qiyāmah was to warn them so that they would realize that there is no Being worthy of worship and obedience except the One Being of Allah Ta'ālā, and so that whoever from among them has some sense left in him or her would desist from Shirk while there was still the time to do so.

**With the help and grace of Allah Ta'ālā
The Commentary on
Sūrah Ibrāhīm
ends here.**